Mature

Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Graphic Depictions Of Violence

M/M
Other

Toy Story (Movies)

Buzz Lightyear/Woody Pride

Buzz Lightyear
Woody Pride
Original Characters
Bonnie Anderson
Bonnie Anderson's Mother

Horror
Body Horror
Angst
Dark
Psychological Trauma
Torture
Mad Science
Dubious Science
Unethical Experimentation
Hurt/Comfort
Recovery
Story within a Story
Returning Home
Sinister Implications
"scientific" logs
Humans are Bastards
Sad Fluff
Blood
Trust Issues
English

For the Best of Humanity

TenvalKazeg

Summary:

Toys don't reveal themselves being alive for plenty of reasons. Kids' well-being, their own health and the deep knowledge, that most humans are not good. By an unfortunate accident, Buzz and Woody learn it themselves.
After a month of freaky experiments, it's up to them to recover and find a way to live forward.
Now with illustrations

Notes:

Cudos for truly amazing forlovewithyou and bottled_lightning for a great brainstorm <3

Anyway, before you read: mind the rating, the tags and the fact that the author themselves is horrified while writing it. I explore my deepest fears with the work, so prepare for a ride.

Illustrations are by me (https://www.tumblr.com/nightjars-nest-art)

Chapter 1 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/137558563)

EXPERIMENTAL PROTOCOL

SUBJECT 1: the "Buzz Lightyear" action figure modelled as a character of a TV show, which was popular 10 years ago. Has visible wear signs on the edges.
SUBJECT 2: the old cowboy-shaped rag doll, probably manufactured in 1950s (?). Surprisingly good condition: no damage except for a red stitch on a right shoulder.
Both subjects show the ability to move.

---LOG 1---
PURPOSE: to make the subjects move
Test 1: Persuasion.
Results: Negative on both subjects
Test 2: Physical impact.
Results: Negative on both subjects
Test 3: Physical damage (needles).
Results: Negative on both subjects
Test 4: Physical damage (scissors).
Results: Negative on both subjects
Test 5: Fire.
Results: Positive on S1
Notes: S1 blinked when the burning match was taken close to S2. When the match was near its arm, S1 jumped, showing signs of distress. S2 stays still.
Test 6: Water.
Results: Positive on S2
Notes: When S1 was threated to get a glass of water poured into its battery case, S2 became animated with the same signs as S1 in the previous test.
RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:
Both subjects show clear signs of being animated. Moreover, they show a capability of emotions (fear) and speak perfect English, which is surprising because of their lack of vocal cords (?). The matter warrants more investigation. Subjects are contained in a standard cage for lab animals with a camera and the motion detector.

The crescent moon watched the streets of suburbia. In the middle of the night, they were almost empty and quiet, except for an occasional car or a stray cat. People slept peacefully in their homes, getting ready for the next day to come, not knowing about two desperate souls trying to find a good place to hide.

One of the souls - the small, sturdy space ranger toy, - walked tiredly, but with great determination in his blue eyes. Another one - the cowboy-shaped rag doll - hanged on the ranger's arm limply, barely staying awake and leaving wet traces behind his long legs. The space ranger kept looking around, quietly asking his fellow about something from time to time. When the cowboy pointed to the small gazebo with a planked decorative base in the yard of a seemingly empty house, the toy went there. Luckily, he was tiny enough to get between the wooden planks into the small, dusty, but more or less clean and, most importantly, closed space.

The ranger sat down and leaned to the wall with the completely exhausted face. He turned away politely, when the cowboy squeezed his torso, arms and legs to get rid of water. The doll whimpered softly while dealing with cotton, which stuck out of his torn belly, but did not make any other sound. After that, he tucked his legs under his chin and sat closely to the ranger.

"Buzz?.." The cowboy asked after several minutes of silence.

"Woody."

"How're the batteries?"

"Could be better. How's stuffing?"

"Same."

And that was it. Buzz closed his eyes. Woody laid his head onto the melted plastic green plate and embraced the white arm, barely believing he was free to do it again.

Minds of both were empty.

---LOG 2---

TEST SUBJECT: S1, S2

PURPOSE: understanding the emotional range (scratched out) making the subjects stay animated

Note 1: the original purpose was delayed due to S1 refusal to cooperate.

Note 1.1: S1 and S2 go still at the sight of a human entering the room. The lock of the cage is broken: the camera captured that S2 had been trying to open it for the whole night and managed to do it just before the investigator entered the laboratory. The lock was fixed.

Test 1: Persuasion.

Result: Negative

Test 2: Water.

Result: Negative/Positive on S2

Note: S2 immediately came alive with signs of distress. By its expression and the words it used ("Don't do this", "Please", " Buzz, wake up") it seems to have compassion. The floor of the cage was connected to electrical wires.

Test 3: Compassion.

Result: Positive.

Note: When S1 was threated to have S2 electrocuted, it stood still. After the floor of the cage was charged, S2 showed signs of high distress and pain (?). S1 became animated, showing signs of distress as well. Both subjects were told to stay animated so the other would not be harmed.

Test 4: Control.

Result: Positive on both subjects.

Note: After the investigator left the room and re-entered it, both subjects stood animated.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

Both subjects show the capability of compassion at least by degree specific to rats. For better control, the subjects were put into separate cages with charged floors and enforcened locks.

For further investigation: the camera fixated both subjects trying to break the locks. Both show signs of reaching for each other's company.

The hours went, and the first pinkish rays fell through the gazebo planks. The toys inside its base did not move, snuggling to each other as if it was their last time. Buzz sat so motionless, that he looked like a simple action figure he actually was. Woody cletched to his arm, shivering slightly, looking at the drying water puddles with an empty, wild stare.

"Woody?" said Buzz so suddenly, that the cowboy jerked.

"Eh?"

"Are you sure that the house is empty?"

Woody frowned.

"The car wasn't there. Probably, the family is away for some time."

"But what if they return?"

Woody gulped, suddenly feeling dizzy. He had not thought about the possibility. The gazebo base seemed good for a hiding place, but what if they had a kid? Which could find them, and take them out, and...

...hurtshandssmellhumanshandshandsstopitstopit...

Buzz looked at his buddy, who began to shake uncontrollably, and hugged him tighter. The simple gesture took yet another piece of battery charge, which caused him to see black stars for a moment. Surprisingly, even in his state, Woody noticed it.

"You need new batteries." muttered he.

"Don't worry about that, Sheriff. Not now."

But Woody would not be himself, if he stopped worrying. Buzz needed batteries. He himself had to sew the torso. Sew...

...icantpleaseithutlrtsneedleneedleletmefreezeicanticant...

...the torso. He needed a thread and needles. Needles. The only thought made Woody gasp for air. Needles, hands, thread, hands, *the human*, who would hurt Buzz had he gone limp, hands...

"I can go and get us supplies."

Woody barely managed to speak like a sane person. Of course, Buzz saw that clearly. He would not be Buzz, if he did not. Even in his own pitiful state.

"Out of question."

"But you..."

"With your wounds you may get caught. Out of question."

Woody sighed. Buzz spoke harshly, borderline rudely, but he understood, why. Even the act of talking drew the space ranger out. Secretly, Woody considered himself lucky that he was not dependent on a separate power source.

"Then freeze at least, it will save a bit of..."

"Out of question." Buzz winced painfully.

No wonder, why. Woody stared at his knees in embarrassment. How could he suggest it, when he could not convince himself to go limp, too? A single thought of it caused the phantom of Buzz's scream in his ears. He had never heard Buzz screaming like this until the...

The doll squeezed himself into the plastic hug. What else could he do apart from it?

---LOG 3---

TEST SUBJECT: S2

PURPOSE: Exploring the sensing abilities

Note: The subject had demonstrated the ability to feel pain from electricity earlier. The previous experiment proved to be efficient: both subjects had not tried to go into the "toy mode" after human entered the room.

Test 1: Touches by fingers.

Note: The subject was told to describe its sensations.

Cloth: "Nice"

Head: "Okay"

Face: "Okay". Distress signs.

Neck: "Stop it". After the electricity on S1: "Unpleasant, weird". High distress signs.

Stitches on arms: "Nice"

Stitches on the torso: "Ticklish".

Note: S2 laughed at it. Probably, it can feel positive emotions. For further investigation.

Stitches on outer sides of legs: "Okay". Distress signs.

Stitches on inner sides of legs: High distress, tried to kick a hand with boots. After the electricity on S1: "Weird, scary, stop it"

Boots: "Nothing"

Result: S2 seems to have sensations similar to humans.

Note: Even after a 2 minutes break, S2 did not calm down enough. S1 demonstrates a high rate of distress and compassion.

Test 2: Sharp object (paper cutter)

S2 shows high distress at the first look on the tool.

Cloth: "Hurts, stop it". High distress.

Head: "Hurts". High distress.

Face: "Stop it, please". After electricity on S1: "Hurts". Very high distress.

Neck: "Hurts". Very high distress.

Stitches on arms: "Hurts"

Note: despite the description, S2 laughed at it, but without a sign of enjoyment. Probably, it is able to experience more complicated emotions. For further investigation.

Stitches on torso: "Hurts, but no as much as a neck, thank you."

Note: The phrase sounded sarcastic (?).

Stitches on outer sides of legs: "Hurts, of course".

Note: The phrase sounded sarcastic too, despite S2 showing a high level of distress.

Stitches on inner sides of legs: "Hurts, stop it". Very high distress.

Notes: Despite the previous sarcastic tone, S2 started to cry. The description is based on the previous ones, because the actual phrase was nearly unintelligible. Tears are absent.

Boots: "Nothing"

Result: S2 is capable of feeling pain.

Note: The sensitive places are similar to those of humans. Probably, it is because of S2 humanoid shape. The level of distress did not lower down after a 5 minutes break. S1 shows obvious signs of compassion: possible relationships? For further investigation.

Test 3: Water.

Cloth: "Cold. Hard to breathe"

Note: S2 does not have anything to breathe with. For further investigation.

Head: "Nothing"

Face: "Nothing". High distress.

Note: S2 started to choke (?) on water. For further investigation.

Neck: "Nothing".

Stitches on arms: "Cold"

Stitches on torso: "Cold"

Stitches on legs: "Cold"

Boots: "Nothing"

Result: S2 is able to feel water only with its clothed parts.

Note: S2 seems to close emotionally during the test. For further investigation.

Test 4: Fire

Result: The test is cancelled due to the risk to destroy the clothed parts. Both subjects demonstrate an extremely high level of distress at the first look at the lit match.

TEST SUBJECT: S1

PURPOSE: Testing the sensing capabilities of a subject made of different material. S1 shows signs of pain when electrocuted.

Test 1: Touches by fingers

Note: the subject was told to describe its sensations.

Head: "Okay"

Face: "Okay". Distress signs.

Neck: "Embarrassing".

Note: S1 shows more steady reactions.

Arm joints: "Nice, ticklish a bit"

Plates: "Nice"

Rubber: "Ticklish". Distress signs.

Outer sides of legs: "Okay". Distress signs.

Inner sides of legs: "Embarrassing, stop it". Distress signs.

Note: S1 seems to be less emotional. S2 demonstrates extremely high compassion signs, which interrupt the experiment. After applying electricity, the test was continued.

Boots: "Nothing"

Result: S1 has sensing abilities comparable to humans.

Note: S1 shows signs of complicated emotions and the ability to memorize the tests on S2. It gives direct answers without hesitation.

Test 2: Sharp object (paper cutter)

Torso: "Ticklish"

Head: "Hurts". High distress signs.

Face: "Hurts". Distress signs.

Neck: "Hurts". High distress signs.

Arm joints: "Ticklish"

Plates: "Ticklish". Distress signs.

Buttons: "Hurts". High distress signs.

Rubber: "Hurts". High distress signs.

Outer sides of legs: "Ticklish". Distress signs.

Inner sides of legs: "Ticklish, embarrassing, stop it". Distress signs.

Boots: "Nothing"

Result: S1 is capable of feeling pain only in rubber areas.

Note: The sensitive places are similar to those of humans. Probably, it is because of S1 humanoid shape. However, the hard parts are not as sensitive as the soft ones - similar to S2.

Test 3: Water

Head: "Cold".

Face: "Unpleasant".

Note: Like S2, S1 began to "choke" on water.

Neck: "Cold". Distress signs.

Arms: "Cold in joints."

Plates: "Nothing". Distress signs.

Buttons: "Very cold, hurts". Very high distress signs.

Rubber: "Cold".

Legs: "Cold in joints". High distress signs.

Boots: "Nothing"

Battery case: "Don't do this". Very high distress signs.

Note: even if threatened to have S2 electrocuted, S1 insisted on its words and explained that the test would be fatal for it.

Result: S1 feels water and expresses high distress level if it is applied on non-hermetic parts. For further investigation.

Test 4: Fire

Applied only onto a plate. Very high distress level, "hurts".

Result: Despite the lesser sensing abilities, S1 is able to feel its armor being melted.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

Both subjects are capable of feeling touches and pain. Cloth, vinyl and rubber are more "sensitive" to it, than plastic. The ability of breathing is hinted. Both subjects demonstrate the capability of having strong, complicated emotions.

Side note: they don't even have nerves, how is it possible?!

The sun rays were changing their hue slowly from pinkish to white to orange. The air around was so pleasantly warm, even hot, like it always was in that part of the country in the middle of the summer. That brought a relief: it meant, that the toys were in the same area, as their home was.

Woody could not stop thinking.

Home. He had no idea, how far it was. The poster on a wall in the...

...wehavetogetoutcoldsmellhandspaingetoutwehavetowehave...

...had a "TriCounty" word on it, but it meant nothing. Maybe the another souvenir the human...

...hateyouillripyoubiteyoutearyoureyesouthateyouhateyou...

...got from their home town. Woody had to find a map to know, where they both ended up. But finding a map meant entering the house, which probably had humans inside.

The last thing Woody wanted to see was a human. Any human in any form, even a kid.

...whydidsheleaveusalone...

The doll swiped away the liquid, which suddenly appeared on his eyes, with a flap of his plaid shirt. Yet another consequence of the time spent in... The actual tears began to stream down his cheeks, and Woody could not even stop them. He hid his face in the hat so at least Buzz would not notice him breaking.

Of course, Buzz noticed. But he was not able to even lift an arm to calm his friend down.

By the night, both laid limply on each other, not speaking or moving at all.

Chapter 2 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/137559067)

The sun shines brightly onto the playground. The soft wind blows through the young June leaves. The grass is so soft and green, and the sky is so blue and filled with small soft clouds, just like those on the wallpapers the certain small boy - now a handsome young man - once had.

The girl no more than five years old plays with her precious toys, not noticing anything around. For her, all toys are precious, of course, because they are certainly alive and they are her best friends. But Mom told her to take only so much for the short trip, so she chose the newest ones: the Sheriff with a shiny star on his vest, and the space ranger, the bravest and the coolest toy in the world. For her, they are besties and cannot be separated. Andy told her so, and it has to be true.

Suddenly, Dad calls for the girl to have a look on a mantis he found in the bush slightly aside from the playground. Bonnie - this is the name of the girl - runs to him excitedly, forgetting about her toys. The Unstoppable Duo is left alone for some time. The Sheriff gets up on elbows, smiling sheepishly at his hand, which landed dangerously close to the space ranger's one. The latter gets up too, gives his famous cocky grin and takes the hand surprisingly gently. No one of them notices the tall, rail-thin man, who stops abruptly at the sight.

When Bonnie gets back, she finds no trace of both of her toys.

Only by the next evening Woody felt himself more or less alive. Shedding tears was exhausting: the human muttered something about "energy" while filling the notepad, while...

...stopitilldoanythingnotthisdontdothisdontmakeme...

Woody managed to suppress the wave of nausea caused by the memory, but he saw his legs and hands shaking like leaves. He lifted his head from the white plastic knee and looked at its owner.

"Buzz?"

The space ranger did not react at all. Not a word, not a move, not even a blink. He stared into the void with his trademark expression of a bull not knowing he was going into the slaughter facility. Woody got up immediately and shook Buzz by shoulders.

"Hey, Buzz! Wake up!"

The toy mode. Please, may it be the toy mode.

"Buzz! Are you here?"

Please, the toy mode, please...

"Bud, give me a sign! Hey! Anything, then go freeze for as long as you want!"

The space toy stood like, well, a toy. Woody growled and pushed one of Buzz's buttons. No sound came from within his friend. The batteries had finally reached their last limits.

Woody tossed his arms, felt the sharp pain in his own rip and fell down with a groan, hitting his head with a fist in annoyance.

"Stupid, stupid, stupid...!"

Buzz would have hold for so much longer if he had not acted so egoistically! He had to be stronger than this, so Buzz would not have to calm him down and move, and speak so much... He would be alive now!

But for how much time?

Woody shrinked onto himself, overwhelmed by thoughts and feelings. Not for long, that's for sure. Even without the rag doll's tantrums, Buzz would turn off eventually, sooner or later. The ranger *needed* batteries, even if he had brushed it off earlier. He had only the cowboy to find and bring them to him. And the cowboy had a huge hole, which leaked stuffing. Thinking of it, Woody absentmindedly took a handful of cotton, shook off sand and put it into himself, wincing. Then, he carefully peeked outside.

There was no car. Probably, the way was clear. Woody examined the lawn in front of him, making the plan on the spot. He felt much better doing this.

At least, planning did not include the paralyzing thoughts on their future.

---LOG 4---

PURPOSE: The further investigation on sensing capabilities (extreme temperatures)

TEST SUBJECT: S1

Test 1: Heat 325K

The max temperature is chosen in accordance with standard AA batteries characteristics. The electricity on S2 cage (x5 times) did not make S1 come alive with batteries removed.

Result: Positive. S1 is capable to feel heat.

Note: The temperature range from 297K to 313K seems to be the best for S1 condition. S1 showed the signs of comfort. At 318 (the max storage temperature for AA) the first signs of distress were noticed. At 325K S1 stopped moving, but did not go still and demonstrated a high level of distress.

Test 2: Freeze 253K

The min temperature is based on AA batteries standard characteristics.

Result: Positive. S1 is capable to feel cold.

Note 1: At the temperature range 297-273 S1 behaves normally and shows signs of comfort. At 273-253 range S1 moves increasingly slower and shudders (?). At 253 S1 went into the catatonic state.

Note 2: Even after heating to the room temperature, S1 moves significantly slower and demonstrates signs of exhaustion. The most probable cause is that the quick temperature changes lowered the capacity of batteries.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

Test 1: Heat 375K

The max temperature is based on polyvinyl glass transition.

Result: Positive. S2 is capable to feel heat.

Note: S2 shows signs of comfort at the temperature range 303-323K. The first signs of distress are demonstrated at 325K. At 330K S2 begins to choke (?) and tries to leave the container. At 370K it lays on a floor in a fetal position and touches its face continuously.

Test 2: Freeze 258K

Result: Positive. S2 is capable to feel cold.

Note: S2 shows signs of comfort at the temperature range 303-288K. The further lowering of temperature causes increasing distress signs. At 273K S2 begins to shake and takes a curled position, which it does not change until going into the catatonic state at 258K.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

Both subjects are capable of feeling temperature.

Side note: S2 cletched to my hands when I took it out of a refrigerator, which could be because of its sensitive cloth and vinyl parts. Getting attached to subjects is unprofessional.

The lawn and the street looked empty of humans and animals. Still, Woody hesitated. The gazebo base seemed closed and safe, and he had to admit, that he became unused of being anywhere in the open. Moreover, the only thought of leaving Buzz alone in his state was terrifying. What if *the human* found him?..

Woody shook his head. There was no *human*. He could not know they were hiding there. Could he?

He needed to prepare, after all. He had to get everything they needed on one go, thus, there was no privilege to make a mistake.

Woody walked carefully to the lifeless form by the wall. There had been water everywhere, what if some of it seeped into the battery case? Buzz could tell that it was fine all the time, but Woody had to be sure.

He put his hands on the lid and stopped abruptly at the strong feeling of disgrace. Buzz began to protect his back after the incident in the Sunnyside daycare, allowing only Woody and Jessie...

...jessiepalsslinkyrexguysnonooneisaliveiswearwearetgeonlypotatoheadhammimissyouimissyousomuch...

...to touch it. No wonder, why he acted like this. Under the lid, there was an access to his whole personality, and it had been violated for so many times. Woody could not help, but feel himself a traitor right now.

He muttered an apology, trying to stay calm. Of course, he received no answer. As delicately as he could, Woody removed the lid, using his badge as a screwdriver, hardly caring if it could get damaged. Then, he pulled away the useless batteries and gasped in shock.

Sure, water had leaked inside. The drops of it were still there, and the metal parts were covered in visible orange spots.

Woody covered his mouth, feeling a wave of panic hovering over him. What could he do?! To wipe away the drips, that was the first thing. With what? His bandana was not removable, and it still was slightly wet around the neck anyway. A sleeve? Woody tried, but the cloth only spreaded the drops into the thin water layer. He had to use something more absorbing. Like...

Cotton.

Woody took a look at his rip.

No way.

But there was no other way, either. Besides, he would lose some of it on his way for supplies. Telling it to himself, Woody slowly put a hand on his own padding. Come on, do it quickly, and it won't hurt so much...

In the end, Woody found himself leaning to the wall with spinning head, black stars in his eyes and a great desire to throw up, but, most importantly, with a great handful of more or less clean cotton in his hands. That would be enough. It was the lesser thing Woody could do for Buzz after all of the ranger's attempts to save him from yet another electrical shock and much more.

He stuck the cotton into the case, making sure, that it covered all the water inside. The type of batteries - usual AA - he remembered by heart, as he had changed them for so many times. Fine. Where could be they storaged? He recalled their home...

...homeiwantogohomepleaseletusgoilldoanythinglethimgoatleastpleaseplease...

...Dad used to have plenty of batteries in the garage. So, it would be best to start from there.

"I'll be back." said Woody to the toy in front of him.

Even in his own ears, his voice sounded miserably.

---LOG 5---

PURPOSE: Interview.

TEST SUBJECT: S1, S2

INTERVIEWER: Arthur Warren

Test 1: Interview

The test is captured on a video camera with sound. Both subjects were resistant to cooperate, so the persuasion protocol was applied.

TRANSCRIPTION

AW: ...So, everything is settled. You have to answer my questions directly and honestly. In case of each of you denying the answer or lying, you know, what will happen.

S2: The another shock, right?

AW: Exactly. On your friend.

S2: ...As expected.

S1: Woody, easy.

S2: Sure, Buzz.

AW: From the previous tests, it was acknowledged that you can feel physical intervention. Is that right?

S1: Affirmative. (looks at S2, who begins to shake)

AW: What about the emotional impact?

S2: ...Are you serious?

AW: Let me get clear. S2, what kind of emotion do you feel right now?

S2: ...what. (begins to shake harder) You've kidnapped us. You make us live in those cages, you hurt Buzz, you hurt me, you take those freaking notes while doing this, you've separated us from our family, our kid...

S1: Woody.

S2: ...and you ask how do I feel? ! (raises voice) FUCKING GREAT! Better than any time before!!! Are you happy now?! (looks at the AW hand near the controller) NO!!! Don't do this! Sorry! I'm so sorry! Please, don't!

AW: S2, answer my question.

S2: (hangs its head) Rage. I feel rage.

AW: Thank you, S2.

S2: I have a name, you know... No! Sorry, please! Subject two, I get it. (quietly) I guess, I don't have a name from now on...

AW: S2, what do you feel right now?

S2: Sadness at best. Grief.

AW: Grief. That's interesting. Noted. S1, the same question.

S1: Rage and sadness.

AW: S1, don't repeat after S2.

S1: Would you please not do this? There's no need. I'm really angry right now, but, I guess, I can't do anything about it. Despair is the best word.

S2: Buzz...?

S1: Later, Sheriff.

AW: S1, you seem to be more emotionally reserved than S2. Why so?

S1: I follow the protocol of interrogation prescribed by Star Command for rangers captured by Emperor Zurg. I answer the questions directly if they do not harm my fellow people.

AW: What the... (cough) So, do you consider yourself a space ranger?

S1: I am a toy. Being the toy and following Star Command protocols are not mutually exclusive concepts.

AW: I see. S2, I see your face changed. What do you feel?

S2: Go to hell... Sorry! I feel proud of Buzz, that's all.

AW: Thank you. S1, how did you acknowledge yourself a toy?

S1: That's a long story. I considered myself a real space ranger until I saw the TV advertisement. Then, Woody confirmed my true nature. We've become best friends since then.

AW: What did you feel when you knew that you aren't a person?

S2: "Aren't a person"?!! How dare you... No! Sorry! I'm sorry! Shutting up, alright...

AW: S2, don't interrupt the interview.

S2: Yes. Yes, I won't, sorry. I'm sorry.

AW: Thank you. S1, back to the question.

S1: I felt useless. "Non-person", actually, is a good description. Woody made me feel alive again.

AW: Thank you. Noted. S1, what do you feel about S2?

(Both subjects demonstrate distress signs.)

S1: Repeat the question, please.

AW: S1, what do you feel about S2?

S1: He's my friend.

AW: That's not the answer. What do you <u>feel</u> about it?

S1: Him. Not "it".

AW: We don't use such pronounces for animals and things. Back to the question.

S1: Woody is not a "thing"! He's a living person!

(S2 screams after applied electricity)

S1: Stop it!

AW: S1, return to my question.

S1: He's my friend. More than a friend. Okay, I get it, the question is about feeling. Alright. Well. (coughs) Well. Fine. Okay. I love him. Enough?

AW: Love? Interesting. Noted for further investigation. S1, what do you mean by "love"?

S1: I can't function properly without him. I think, it's a good enough definition.

AW: Interesting. Thank you. S2, I see you hiding your face in the hat. What do you feel right now?

S2: ...honestly...

AW: S2, I'm talking to you.

S2: Sorry! I'm so sorry!

AW: S2, answer my question.

S2: I... I... I don't know? Like my cotton swirls inside? I... Eh...

AW: Fine, that's enough. S2, what do you feel about S1?

S2: ...

AW: S2, did you hear my question?

S2: ...Er, yes, yes, properly... Hmmm... I? Love him? Yes, I guess. I love him.

AW: Why do you hide your face?

S2: ...it's so embarrassing. It wasn't supposed to be like that. That's wrong, that's so wrong...

AW: "Embarrassing" is enough. S2, is it connected with the embarrassment caused by physical intervention?

S2: No. Different.

AW: Thank you. S1, are you the only toys who are animated?

S1: ...Yes, we are.

AW: You hesitated for a bit. Do you answer honestly?

S1: Yes, I do. The only thought of it is scary.

AW: Scary. Noted. S1, I give you another try. Are there other toys who are animated?

S1: No.

(S2 screams from applied electricity)

AW: Are you sure?

S1: Positive.

(S2 screams from applied electricity)

AW: S1, are you two the only animated toys?

S1: We are.

(S2 screams from applied electricity)

S2: We ARE the only ones! He tells the truth!

S1: Affirmative.

AW: S1, don't you miss your toy friends?

(S2 screams from applied electricity)

S1: The other toys are things, and I don't befriend things.

AW: Fine. S2, do you have a family?

S2: I belong to a kid.

AW: S2, do you have a toy family apart from S1?

S2: No.

(S1 screams from applied electricity)

S2: Stop it! That's the truth!
AW: S2, are you sure you're the only toys alive?
S2: Yes! I'm sure!
(S1 screams from applied electricity)
S2: But I'm telling the truth!
AW: S2, there's no alive toys apart from you, is that so?
(S1 screams from applied electricity)
S2: Yes! No one, I swear!
AW: S2, have you loved any toy before S1?
(S1 screams from applied electricity)
S2: No! No one! There was no one in the first place!
AW: Okay. S2, if so, how did you feel before meeting S1?
S2: (shuddering) Lonely. I belonged to two kids in a row, but still felt lonely.
AW: S2, how did you acknowledge you nature?
S2: I just knew it. From the box.
AW: S2, how did you learn to speak?
S2: I listened to humans and read, when no one was around.
AW: S2, how have you learnt to read?
S2: I watched my first kid studying.
AW: S2, how did you manage to endure the isolation?
S2: It was the part of my existence, I guess.
AW: ...Okay, that's sounds plausible for now. Thank you for your answers.
S2: May I ask a question?
AW: You may, S2.
S2: Will you let us go home? Bonnie needs us. We belong to her. Don't you have a kid who loves their toys?
AW: Letting you go is not possible right now. You both are an exceptional case. I have to study you for our future, and believe me, I do it for the best of humanity.
S2: ...the best of humanity...
(End of the recording)

RESULT OF THE EXPERIMENT
Both subjects have a wide emotional range and are able to describe their feelings. The possibility of "love" warrants further investigation, because both subjects lack the biological characteristics which cause love in the first place.

Side notes: They're uncannily human-like and obviously are in relationships. I'm pretty sure other toys are alive, but those two are insisting on them being the only ones. Even S2 didn't break, despite being much more emotionally unstable. Protecting their friends? That's an exciting possibility!
Watch out for S2: it has high charisma and surely knows how to use it for psychological manipulation (contradicts to its reassurance of spending decades alone). Btw, where did it learn to swear?

Camera recordings note: the interview seems to exhaust both subjects. No one tried to break a lock at night. Both spent time sitting at corners closer to the other cage and talking.

Chapter 3 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/137854903)

When Woody got to the garage, the sun had sat down already. The sunset painted the white walls brightly red, like a huge stoplight. Without a significant pile of stuffing, moving around became much easier, to Woody's grim astonishment. It did not leak from the hole, at least. Still, the rag doll sneaked carefully, trying to protect his belly from grass and dirt. His head became lighter as well, and breathing became much harder.

On the side of the garage, he found a hole, probably, gnawed by an opossum or some rodent. It was large enough for his head, so getting inside was easy. Woody gulped slightly at the vast open space, but made himself steady and ran across it to the working bench.

He quickly climbed on it and crawled among the tools. There was nothing unusual, only wrenches, bolts, an oil can and other metal things Woody did not know the use of. The only more or less useful thing for him was a roll of tape.

...takeitawaytakeitawayithurtshurtsstopithurtspleasenonottherenotthere...

Woody wobbled slightly, touching his mouth. No. There was no time for this. Buzz waited for him, and it was just a simple tape. He could use it properly. He put a piece of it on the rip, felt slightly better, and looked through the stuff again. He could not tell, if the lack of air he experienced was because of lost stuffing or a deep, all absorbing panic.

There were no fitting batteries. Not a single one. He had to get into the main building.

Woody ran a hand across his vinyl hair. Okay. At least, now he could move faster. Maybe, he would meet some toys inside, which would save time for searching.

He got outside through the same hole, made sure, that everything was clear, and sprinted to the main door. If he recalled correctly by the look at it two nights earlier, it had a cat flap. Woody did not remember, how he got up the stairs, in front of the whole street to watch, but, luckily, no human noticed him. And, just as luckily, the door *did* have a flap. The rag doll had no problems getting through it.

So far, everything was going smoothly. Woody saw the dark hall, similar to his previous home, white stairs and the big tropical plant at its base. The floor was slightly dusty, which concerned the cowboy: the longer the family was away, the higher chances were for them to return soon.

Stepping as quietly as he could, not getting out of shadows, Woody began the exploration of the first floor.

---LOG 6---

PURPOSE: Studying body functions at different degrees of incapacitation

TEST SUBJECT: S1

Test 1: Removal of the upper limb.

Result: S1 does not show any signs of pain. The removed limb does not move.

Note: S1 laughed at it and said, that it was assured of being a toy by losing its arm.

Test 2: Removal of the lower limb.

Result: S1 shows some signs of distress, but it seems to be because of the joint location. No signs of actual pain. The removed limb does not move. The limb was returned to its original place.

Test 3: Removal of batteries.

Result: Like during the temperature tests preparation, S1 showed signs of high distress at the removal process. After it, S1 went still. The electricity applied on S2 for 5 times did not make it become animated. The batteries were returned to the original place, after this S1 became animated again.

Test 4: Removal of a button.

Result: S1 shows signs of very high distress and pain. The button was returned to its original position.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

S2 showed resistance from the beginning of the tests. Electricity was applied on S1. Extra restrictive measures (copper wire and tape) were applied, too.

Note: S2 can bite. Tape and thick gloves are obligatory from now on for every test except for interviews.

Side note: God, I hope it isn't rabid.

Test 1: Removal of the upper limb.

Result: S2 shows very high distress, but no signs of significant pain. The removed limb does not move. The limb was returned to its original place.

Note: S2 reacted worse on a possibility of removing the right arm. Probably, it is because of the red stitch, which is obviously hand-made - maybe the stitch is sentimental (?) for it. Left arm was removed instead. Sewing caused S2 going still until the electricity application on S1. After it, S2 showed signs of pain every time during stitching process.

Test 2: Removal of the lower limb.

Result: S2 shows signs of high distress and pain. The removed limb does not move. The limb was returned to its original place.

Test 3: Removal of the vest.

Result: S2 shows signs of high distress and pain. The vest was returned to its original place.

Note: It seems like the vest is like skin for S2 despite it being a part of clothes.

Test 4: Removal of the head.

Result: The removed head shows signs of pain, while the whole body does not move. The head was returned to its original place.

Note: S2 stopped making sounds without a body.

Test 5: Removal of the voice box.

Result: S2 showed signs of extremely high distress and resisted the intervention. It stopped when its back was opened. The removal process caused signs of pain. After it S2 went unconscious (?): it had its eyes closed, so the "toy" mode cannot

be considered. S2 became animated 1 minute 37 seconds later and began to emit crying sounds. The voice box was returned to its original place.

Note: The removal of a sound mechanism did not cause the voice loss. For further investigation.

Side note: I hope I'll find a less damaging way than the removal of the head to shut this thing up.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

Both subjects demonstrate different approach to lost parts. Neither of them was damaged enough to lose a capability to "live".

Side note: my poor eardrums. Also need to get vaccinated just to be sure. What a day.

The searchings in the living room and the kitchen were in vain. The house was so pristine, that Woody felt shivers from it: it was just like *there*. White walls, clean tables, clean shelves. Everything was so into place that it looked eerie. The purple shadows made only added to the chilly atmosphere. Something was not right in the house.

But, when Woody got up to the second floor, he saw some flicker of living chaos at last. Namely, a brightly-colored letter cube left near the half-closed door. Woody approached it cautiously and saw pastel-pink wallpapers. Obviously, it was a kid's room.

Woody sighed in relief. At last. His voice box tightened in nostalgic feelings. After all of the time spent in a cage, he finally saw something warm and familiar.

Familiar...

Unfortunately, Woody glanced up, and his stare stuck on the photo hanging on a wall.

A simple family photo. Smiling faces of a father, a mother and a small girl. Mountains on the background.

Familiar.

The father had a familiar face.

The doll gasped hardly for air, but could not get enough of it even by several deep inhales. His legs began to shake so hard, that Woody had to back against the wall. He stared wildly, not able to look away from the damned face he saw so many excruciating times.

That bastard had a family.

He actually had a child.

And Woody himself got them both right into his lair.

"Who are you?"

Woody jumped on spot with a scream, lost balance and fell onto his back. The phantom of wire on his wrists, elbows and calves flashed inside all of his being, and he got up as quickly as he could. From behind the door, the white teddy bear watched him with their button eyes with curiosity.

"Don't be afraid, I'm not a real bear!" the toy said with a laugh.

"Subject-two!" yapped Woody by a reflex. "No, no, not like that, erm, W... Woo...dy? Yes. Woody."

He barely registered the bear's second phrase, remembering only the question. The questions should had been answered no matter what. The bear tilted his head.

"Cool! I'm Flakey. Are you alright? Where did you come from? Are you the new Ruby's toy?"

Woody blinked. Too many questions. He decided to answer in a row to not to get his mind completely shut down.

"Yes. Street. No."

"You don't seem alright to me." said Flakey.

"Sorry!!!"

By the look of the bear, Woody understood, that the answer was wrong. But... Wasn't he a fellow toy? In the kid's room? Without the electricity, and knives, and tape, and...

"Just... Let me breathe, okay?" asked Woody with a sigh.

He inhaled and exhaled several times, like Buzz had taught him to manage extreme stress. Not that it really calmed him down, but it was better than nothing. Flakey watched him with his impenetrable stare.

...just like his one...

It was ridiculous. All teddies had that kind of expression. It was not connected to *him*, wasn't it?

"Hey, let's go to the room!" said Flakey meanwhile. "It's not so dark there, and guys want to know what's up."

The obvious trap. Or not. Woody could not decide. Did *the human* know they were alive too? Could they work for him?

"...Who's that man?" He pointed at the photo.

The bear squeezed his eyes, as if he was shortsighted.

"Oh! That's Dad. What's wrong?"

Woody still could not wrap his mind around the fact that the monster was a father.

"He's a good man. Sometimes he even plays with Ruby and us!" said Flakey, saw the doll's face and headed decisively to the guest. "Come on, don't be so shy! I'm sorry I've frightened you, but we've never had anyone from outside..."

"One question!" said Woody in a hoarse voice, dodged the bears's paw and felt guilty immediately. "Sorry. Does the human know you're alive?"

"Of course not!" Flakey laughed wholeheartedly. "Man, you're really weird!"

The words were sincere enough. Woody narrowed his eyes.

"That's good."

"Are you coming or not?"

"Do you have batteries? Two double-As, preferably new. My friend needs them."

Woody looked briefly into the room, from which a dozen of plushies and dolls watched the stranger quietly, but without a sign of a threat. The most important thing was the window, which could be opened from inside.

"Yes, Candy and Bronco work on batteries, and there're plenty of spares!" said Flakey proudly.

"Okay."

Frankly speaking, he did not really have a choice.

---LOG 7---

PURPOSE: Close investigation on sensing capabilities during maintenance.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

In the previous experiment S2 demonstrated high level of pain during stitching process, which contradicts its nature (being made of cloth). For the validity of the experiment, the cut was made on the stitches which were proven to be most sensitive.

Test 1: "Toy" Mode

S2 was specifically asked to go still. After it, 10 stitches were made. S2 was asked to describe its feelings.

Result: "slightly ticklish." S2 demonstrates the average level of distress and no signs of pain.

Test 2: "Live" Mode, sewing by hands.

10 (scratched out) 20 stitches were made.

Result: like in previous experiment, S2 demonstrates very high level of distress and signs of pain.

Test 3: "Live" Mode, S2 sewing

20 stitches were made.

Result: S2 demonstrates extremely high level of distress. Signs of pain are lower then in the previous test.

Note: The higher distress level probably has mostly psychological basis.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

Cloth toys are capable of self-repairment. S2 does not feel pain while being repaired in its still state. While being "alive", S2 experiences the highest level of pain when being sewed manually. Self-repairment causes the average pain level.

Side note: the alarming personal investment, which is unprofessional and seems to muddle the results. Probably, I had to choose an arm. Whatever, it deserved it for those $$$ for five shots.

At once, Woody was surrounded by toys. He used to love those moments, but now, he wanted nothing more than to get his hands on supplies and skedaddle.

Questions. Questions. So many questions. Who was he, where did he come from, why he had a tape on a stomach and all the stitches and cuts, was he going to stay, did he like the room... He could not decide, what to answer first, and every second of silence caused his mind go more and more awry. Yet, he could not say a single word.

"Guys, maybe, we should stop!" said Flakey suddenly. "Don't scare our new friend."

The whole room became quieter, and Woody felt a great gratitude towards the bear...

...imcoldsocoldhadshandswarmthankyouthankyou...

...and shivered. Even gratefulness, one of the warmest feeling, had been tainted.

"I need batteries." He repeated, trying to not show more signs of weakness. "Not for me, but for my friend. We were in a great trouble, and he lost his charge"

"I can see." said the plush horse, who, if Woody remembered correctly, was called Bronco. She had a great sympathy in her voice. "Who could cut you so badly?"

At last. Just one question, to which Woody could answer.

"The human."

"It can't be!" said the stuffed giraffe with a voice, which painfully reminded Woody of Buttercup the unicorn. "Humans love toys, they would never do this to us!"

Woody felt his face distorting in a grimace. Of course. Humans love toys. They all were kids earlier, how could they not? He had believed it too many, many years ago, and every time he had been hit by a sharp truth. Humans were monsters, but the young, naive souls could not have known it yet.

"Guys, let's help our friend to get what he needs." said Flakey quickly, seeing the doll beside him looking through the wall with a wide, crooked grin and hollow eyes. "Do you need something for yourself?" he added much quieter, as soon as most of the toys dispersed across the room. "Threads? Needles?"

"...Needles?.." muttered Woody. "Yes. Thank you. A thread and a... needle...? Thank you."

"We could stitch you up, Barbie is an expert!"

"No!!! Sorry! I'm sorry! Just a thread and a needle. I'll manage."

"...Oh, okay." Flakey eyed the guest with great anxiety.

Everything was found in mere minutes. Woody heard himself profusing in gratitudes and apologies for his weird behavior and robbing the others of precious batteries. Everyone just gave him pitiful, worrying looks. They kept saying, that it was nothing, that they had a lot, that Dad won't notice, and Ruby too, and it all looked like a surreal dream. Woody shook at the only thought, that, as soon as he put his hands onto batteries, he would yet again awake in a cold cage with the unbreakable lock.

He decided to use the window to leave the house without a risk of being noticed. On the windowsill, Flakey suddenly stopped him.

"Just between us." he said without all the previous joy in his voice. "What exactly happened to you? So I can protect my pack."

Woody looked at the clean, white, obviously just recently bought teddy in astonishment. So, Flakey was the head toy there. What would Woody himself do? Of course, he would prefer to know the truth. Even if he was so young.

"Ruby's father happened." he said. "He is *not* a good man. For your all's sake, do *not* let him know that you're alive."

He was waiting for a negation, but, to his surprise, Flakey lowered his head with a frown.

"It's impossible, but, for some reason, I believe you." said he seriously. "Two of us disappeared some weeks ago. I'll let the others know."

Two of us?

Woody managed to stay more or less firmly. The velveteen doll and the plush rabbit. They were Ruby's toys, and *the human* stole them, and made him and Buzz...

...itsnotalivesureitsathingdontdothistheycanfeeltheycantfeelnonono....

"I'm so, so sorry for your friends..." muttered Woody, lowering his eyes in heavy shame. No apologies could cover what he and Buzz had done. He looked at the supplies in his hands and felt the raising fire in his eyes, which, as he had known, led to tears, and that was the last thing he needed right now. "Thank you for all of this, we don't..."

"Don't bother, you've got enough stitches that aren't yours to be scared." Flakey waved his paw. "Good luck to you and your friend!"

Woody nodded with a faint smile. The innocence of the teddy tore his soul apart, but he...

...dirty coward...

...could not tell the whole truth. Buzz was waiting for him.

"By the way." Woody suddenly remembered the most important question. "Where are we? I mean, the quarters."

"Oh!" Flakey brightened. "Ruby learned it recently! It's Oakhill, on the south of Sa-Cisco!"

"Not so far... Thank you, pal. For everything. Truly." With the words, Woody leaped from the window.

In his short flight, he noticed the blinding lights of a car stopping by the garage.

Chapter 4 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/138093970)

At once, Woody jerked to the nearest bush. His voice box was ready to jump out of his throat.

The silver sedan. Bright lights dimmed as it stopped. The door opened, and the figure went out of it.

Woody cletched to the branch to keep himself steady. His whole body shook like crazy and his mind became even worse.

The tall, skinny figure. The half-bald head. Limping heavily. Glasses. Long, just healed scars on the cheek. A thick bandage fully covering one of the eyes.

Woody wanted so badly to hope they did not overdo it, but the truth was, that he hoped for the exact opposite. The sight of the bandage still made the rag doll bare all his teeth in sinister delight. *He* had got the least of what he deserved.

But *the human* was alive, and Woody knew the consequences of harming him too well. His instincts could scream at him to run for as long as they wanted, but the cowboy could not make a mistake and reveal himself.

The man hobbled to the garage doors, opened them and returned to the car. There was no sign of him noticing the rag doll hiding in the shrub. Woody followed his every action, squeezing the batteries and the spool to his chest, begging himself to not move too early. He hoped with all his soul, that, in his current state, the man would be too lazy to check on the gazebo and a backyard.

Only after the human got inside the house and closed the door, Woody began to crawl through grass and shadows towards the gazebo. He checked on the street and the house entrance before making a final sprint. Everything was clear, and, although Woody was not perfectly sure about it, he ran towards their hideout at the highest speed he could perform with damages and the cumbersome burden.

The sight of a dirty white form, still unresponsive, but untouched, caused a wave of relief. Woody embraced the green plates and tucked his face into the helmet, overwhelmed by warm emotions he could not count. Buzz was alright, that was all, what mattered.

The cotton in the battery case absorbed all the water by the time. Woody used it to carefully remove the rust stains from contacts, got rid of remained padding wisps and put the new batteries into their place.

And received a hearty punch in the face.

---LOG 8---

PURPOSE: Further investigation on sensing abilities during maintenance.

TEST SUBJECT: S1

The experiment was scheduled to validate the results of the previous experiment.

Test 1: "Toy" Mode

S1 was specifically asked to go still. After it, the removal of the battery case was performed. S1 was asked to describe its feelings.

Result: "slightly ticklish." S1 demonstrates the low level of distress and no signs of pain.

Test 2: "Live" Mode, maintenance by hands.

The lid was removed with common tools (the screwdriver) and put back.

Result: S1 demonstrates very high level of distress. No signs of pain.

Note: abnormal behavior. For further investigation.

Test 3: "Live" Mode, maintenance performed by S1

Result: S1 demonstrates average level of distress and no signs of pain.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

Battery-powered toys are capable of self-repairment. S1 does not feel pain while being fixed. However, it seems to have psychological issues connected to its battery case.

Side note: the cause of such stress level obviously isn't pain. Perhaps, it's because of vital parts being open. At least, this one doesn't bite.

The last thing Buzz remembered was sitting by a wall with crying Woody beside him, too weak to do anything, even to lift a finger. The next moment, he suddenly was full of energy and with hands on his battery case.

...STOPIT!STOPIT!DONTTOUCH!!!...

At once, he kicked the enemy. To his surprise, *the human* did not hold him down with his hand, much more powerful than even Lotso's thugs. The bastard literally flew off him, as if he weighed nothing.

...wait a minute.

Buzz blinked, as he realized, whom he was fighting.

The dirty, stitched everywhere it could be rag doll sat on his knees, curling on himself and hiding his face in palms. He shuddered visibly.

"Woody? Was that you?" asked the ranger.

"I'm sorry!!!" yelped Woody, not even raising his head. "I had to! You were out, I've brought the batteries, there was no other way, I'm sorry!"

The cry almost got Buzz's wires short-circuited. He heard exactly this phrase in exactly this voice for so many horrifying times, but now, it was directed at him. He still felt hands on his back, but now he remembered, how gentle and *small* they were, and the warm charge fulfilled his insides with energy, and he was so alive again, like he had never been since the refrigerator... After all, it was Woody who was the only one allowed to change his batteries after Sunnyside and before... *This*.

Cautiously, Buzz walked to the huddled form, but stopped abruptly by a pile of cotton.

"What's this?" he asked quietly, chilling at the thought of someone attacking their hideout, while he had been laying helplessly.

"The case was full of water and rust." Woody got his body up, wiped his eyes and stared at the pile tiredly. "It was too dangerous to change them without cleaning."

Buzz felt as if his leg gears were giving up. Woody's torso looked thinner, lumpier, and there was a tape on it, which covered the rip. The guess would made the ranger vomit, if only he could.

"It's yours."

"Yeah. I'd like to put it back." Woody smiled crookedly, not raising his eyes.

At the weak sign of his friend's old personality, Buzz finally lost it. Without a second thought, he hugged Woody with all his returned might, and relished in small, *vinyl* hands laying gently on his shoulders.

"*I'm* sorry for hitting you." muttered he into the bandana. "Thank you. Thank you..."

Instead of answering, Woody sighed deeply and nuzzled into Buzz's neck, holding the plastic shoulders as close, as the chest plate allowed.

By the corner of his eye, Buzz noticed the spool of a yellow thread with a needle.

"Where did you get all of this?"

"The house." All of a sudden, Woody jerked back and stared at Buzz. "We have to leave, right now!"

"Not until you get repaired." said Buzz, putting his hand on the spool.

"No, I mean, we must leave! Now!" Woody glanced at the planks. "It's *his* house, Buzz!"

A wave of panic - a rare phenomenon until recently - hit Buzz. They were in the enemy's lair. Damned batteries, if only they had a bit more charge, so they could settle at least a house farther!

"Freeze." He muttered, grabbing the spool.

"But..."

"Freeze, I'll do it. We can't go with you half-stuffed."

Woody bit his lip, squeezed his eyes shut, as if persuading himself, nodded and fell down with his trademark innocent smile. There was no time for quarrels, he knew it well enough.

Buzz would prefer his friend arguing, like he used to before all of *this*. With a sigh, the ranger bit off a piece of thread, put it into the needle and began to work, shutting off all the screams he had heard, when *the human* had been doing the same thing.

---LOG 9---

PURPOSE: Studying the breathing capability.

TEST SUBJECT: S1

Test 1: Physical impact, torso (rubber parts)

Result: S1 shows signs of distress, but no signs of reduced breathing capability.

Note: S1 seems to become more tense after the previous experiment.

Test 2: Physical impact, neck.

Result: S1 shows the high level of distress and signs of the lack of air. It took 1 minute 3 seconds for S1 to lose consciousness. After 5 minutes, the impact was stopped. S1 became animated.

Test 3: Physical impact, face.

Result: S1 demonstrated the signs of lacking air and became unconscious in 1 minute 0 seconds. After 5 minutes, air was provided. S1 became animated.

Test 4: Vacuum

Result: S1 showed all the signs from previous test and became unconscious in 45 seconds. After 5 minutes, the impact was stopped. S1 became animated.

Note: S1 tried to go still for the first time since the beginning of the project. Electricity was applied to S2.

Test 5: Water.

Result: Test is delayed for further investigation on S1 limits of water resistance.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

Test 1: Physical impact, torso

Result: S2 showed average level of distress, no signs of the lack of air.

Note: "Average" was defined as "high" in previous logs.

Test 2: Physical impact, neck.

Result: Distress level is above average, S2 demonstrates signs of pain. S2 became unconscious after 1 minute 5 seconds. 5 minutes later the impact was stopped. S2 became animated.

Test 3: Physical impact, face.

Result: S2 demonstrates signs of lacking air and becomes unconscious in 1 minute 0 seconds. After 5 minutes, the impact was stopped. S2 became animated.

Test 4: Vacuum.

Result: S2 became unconscious in 15 seconds. After 10 minutes, the air was provided. S2 became animated.

Note: More time to recover should have been provided. The test must be repeated later.

Test 5: Water.

Result: S2 demonstrates movements characteristical for a drowning human. It went unconscious in 40 seconds. S2 face was hold under water for 10 minutes. When it was taken out, S2 became animated, but demonstrated signs of lacking air.

Note: The breathing is obviously connected with padding.

Additional Test 1: Padding removal, 20%

The tape was removed for S2 to describe it's state.

Result: "Hard to breathe." S2 demonstrates higher distress level, which is mostly psychological/caused by pain.

Additional Test 2: Padding removal, 50%

Result: S2 demonstrates reduced capability to answer questions in time.

Additional Test 3: Padding removal, 80%

Result: S2 seems to be more focused on breathing than questions.

Note: electricity did not help.

Additional Test 4: Padding removal, 100%

Result: S2 loses consciousness until the return of padding (30%).

The remaining padding was returned into place. The repetition of Test 4 is delayed because of S2 condition after stitching.

RESULTS OF THE TESTS

Both subjects are capable of breathing. The max time without air is the same as of humans. The external breathing organs are "humanoid" too despite not having nostrils or any other orifices. The breathing mechanism of S1 warrants further investigation. The breathing mechanism of S2 is defined to be body padding. The prolonged absence of air does not kill or damage both S1 and S2.

Side note: Unbelievable! Are they even able to die without full physical destruction?

Buzz made sure that the cotton was clean enough before putting it inside the limp body in front of him, but it still had rusty stains. The padding itself had to be fully replaced: the water cleaned the most of it, but it still looked dull with a deep reddish tint - Buzz shivered, as he remembered its cause.

He shook his head and began to sew. Sure, he was not as good at it as Bo Peep, Mrs. Potato Head or even Jessie were, but his stitches looked much more accurate in comparison to others, made by *the human*. Smaller hands, better understanding and not having to hold a screaming, wriggling toy in place did the job.

"Okay, unfreeze." said Buzz, when everything was done.

Woody blinked and immediately stood up.

"Thanks." said he and looked out from the planks. "All clear. Now, your battery pack, and we're leaving."

Without extra words, Buzz turned his back to his friend, who quickly put the battery pack back into its place, tightening the screws with his badge. After that, both swiftly went outside and ran in shadows to the nearest bush. Then, to the next one, and next one... As far as they could from *the human's* lair. For the whole remained night, until the first sun shine, they ran, not speaking at all because there was no need of it.

When the cars began to appear too often, and the first humans began to leave their homes, they found themselves in an overgrown hedge by a seemingly abandoned house. It had a sign "For Sale", so it had to be safe enough.

The toys snuggled to each other between thin trunks. They had managed to get to the opposite end of the neighborhood, sure. But what was next?

Woody did not want to think about it right now.

They were free. He felt the plastic edges and joints bumps on his chest, and there was the helmet he could put his head on. The white arm stroked his back with gentle power. Buzz was there, fully alive. He was by his side, and no metal bars would ever separate them. That was all Woody could wish for.

Buzz hugged the soft body, relishing in careful touches of vinyl hands. Despite everything happened, they were free, and in the whole infinity he could not think of letting his cowboy go. Only with him, Buzz could find his lost strength and courage again.

It was as if they did not lie, after all, about only two of them being alive.

Chapter 5 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/138300955)

---LOG 10---
PURPOSE: Investigation on the possibility of other toys being "alive".
The individual interviews are considered for the lesser impact of co-operation. Both interviews are recorded by camera with sound.
Test 1.
TEST SUBJECT: S1.
INTERVIEWER: Arthur Warren
TRANSCRIPTION
AW: Okay, it's on. S1, let's start.
S1: Why did you bring me alone?
AW: This was done for the experimental purpose.
S1: Will Woody be alright?
AW: S2 is in its place. S1, you're allowed to ask questions only after a permission.
S1: Roger that.
(S1 seems more tense, than during the first interview)
AW: S1, how do you feel right now?
S1: Anxious. Scared. Angry. I can't find the right word for it.
AW: You don't need to. Noted. S1, would you like to see your friends?
S1: This again... I don't have friends except Woody.
AW: Noted.
(AW puts the plush doll on the table. S1 looks at it, but demonstrates indifference. The same stays after AW puts a paper cutter next to the toy)
AW: S1, do you see those things?
S1: I do.
AW: S1, I ask you to take the cutter and remove the toy's leg.
(S1 does what it was said)
AW: S1, why did you hesitate before making the cut?
S1: I guess, because it's a doll. Woody is a doll too, and I've seen his reactions.
AW: Do you consider this one having the same reactions too?
S1: I don't. It's the associations.
AW: Noted. S1, take out some of the stuffing, please.
(S1 does what it was said)
AW: Don't you think, it'll choke?
S1: I doubt it. It isn't alive.
Note: the expression and voice of S1 are too indifferent for a thing capable of empathy.
AW: S1, are you sure?
S1: Positive.
AW: S1, put the knife down and widen the cut by hands.
(S1 does what it was said)
AW: S1, what did it feel?
S1: Nothing.
AW: What do you feel right now?
S1: Curiosity. The test is much less harmful than the previous ones, so I wonder, why do you make me do this in the first place.
AW: S1, pay attention.
(AW takes the doll and throws it into the paper bin. S1 watches it without any expression change)
AW: After the session, I'm going to throw it out for the morning garbage truck. How do you feel about it?
S1: (shrugs) Okay. Though, you could repair it and give to some kid.
AW: Why would I?
S1: To lessen the ecological impact.
AW: S1, do you realize, that your words are contradicting your previous behavior towards S2?

S1: Woody's an another case. He's a living being.

AW: Noted. Thank you for your answers, S1.

S1: You're welcome.

(end of the recording)

Result: S1 is abnormally calm for a being capable of compassion. Even young children show more empathy towards toys. Either it is pretending or it is a psychopath.

Side note: if it's pretending, then, it's quite a good actor.

Test 2.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

INTERVIEWER: Arthur Warren

TRANSCRIPTION

S2: ...Oh, you've removed the tape, I'm eternally grateful!

AW: S2, your sarcasm will not do you any good. You know, why I use the tape.

S2: If only there wasn't the wire...

AW: S2, for your information, the wire is attached to the electricity source.

S2: ...

AW: I see, you get my point. Let's start. S2, do you miss your friends?

S2: Is Buzz okay?

(S2 screams from applied electricity)

AW: S2, you're only allowed to answer my questions.

S2: ...sorry. I'm sorry.

AW: Good. S2, do you miss your friends?

S2: I don't have any friends except Buzz. The certain kid, maybe. Now, I'm not so sure.

AW: Did the kid know about your exceptional state?

S2: No. We don't reveal ourselves to humans.

AW: "We"?

S2: Buzz and me.

AW: Why so?

S2: You guess.. Sorry! It would be bad for kids' mental health.

AW: Let me make things clear, S2. One of my patients is the young man who is was attacked by his toys in his childhood, and he described the cowboy doll who verbally attacked him and had a physical appearance strongly similar to yours. S2, what do you have to say about it?

(S2 changes its facial expression)

S2: Sid..?! I'm sorry, I, I, well, yeah, that was me. But there weren't any other alive toys around. Maybe, he was hallucinating.

AW: You're right, the man's name is Sidney Phillips. Why did you reveal yourself then?

S2: He threatened to blow up Buzz.

AW: S2, did Sidney know, that S1 is alive?

S2: No. The guy was just having fun. (quietly) Just like you.

AW: Okay. Noted.

(AW puts the paper cutter and a plush rabbit on a table.)

AW: S2, why did you gulp?

S2: ...I don't like the knife.

AW: Anything else?

S2: No.

AW: Noted.

(AW makes the cut himself, because it is dangerous to let S2 move on its own. S2's expression changes significantly for a second, but loses all the emotions after)

AW: S2, why did you flinch?

S2: Bad memories.

AW: S2, what do you think, the rabbit felt?

S2: ...It can't feel anything.

AW: You look like you have something else on your mind.

S2: Only the memories.

(AW takes out the handful of the rabbit's padding. S2 demonstrates indifference.)

AW: S2, don't you think, it'll choke?

S2: It can't breathe in the first place.

AW: S2, are you 100% positive, or do you consider the small possibility of it being alive like you?

S2: I'm positive. I had never known a single alive toy in 40 or so years before Buzz, and never found any other in the latter 11 years.

AW: Wow. Noted.

Side note: this thing is the same age as me.

(AW rips the toy across its whole body and throws it into a paper bin. S2 face does not change its expression.)

AW: After the session, I'm going to throw it out for the morning garbage truck. What do you feel about it?

S2: ...Nothing. You could give it to some kid instead, you know.

AW: Why would I?

S2: Well, they would love it. The rabbit was cute. Bonnie... (S2 gulps) ...Bonnie loves her plush toys.

(S2 expression changes to the sad one)

AW: S2, remind me, who's Bonnie?

S2: The kid I've belonged to.

AW: S2, did she love you?

S2: Now, I'm not sure.

AW: About "love". Does it have any similarity to the way you "love" S1?

(S2's demonstrates strong signs of indignation)

S2: What?! Of course, not, how could you even think about it?!.. I'm sorry! No, no, sure not, it's different.

AW: Different. Noted. That's all I've wanted to know by now. Thank you for being cooperative for once, S2.

S2: Sure. Sure...

(End of the recording)

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

Both subjects insist on other toys being inanimated. S1 and S2 demonstrate uncharacteristically indifferent attitude at the other toy being destroyed and thrown out.

Note: the difference of "love" types mentioned by S2 warrants further investigation.

Side note: both are most certainly lying or have strong psychopathic tendencies/highly alternative mindset. They give me creeps (scratched out thickly)

Camera note: both subjects did not talk to each other for the whole night. S1 sat in the cage corner looking at its hands. S2 sat in the cage corner as well, hiding its face in the hat.

The day was coming to its end, and the first red lights seeped through the leaves. Outside of the bush, the sounds of passing cars, bike bells, dog barking and children's voices filled the air. Humans were returning from their jobs and enjoying their time in the pleasant evening warmth, which changed the ardent heat of the day. In some hours, they would go inside of houses. Adults would make dinner and watch TVs, while younger children would dive into the playtimes. The streets would become empty and more or less safe for moving toys. Woody knew this routine of small towns well enough.

He used to love it. It used to cause a certain bittersweet tingling in his voice box, the vague and not so vague memories, it was connected to his times with friends and Andy, and, later, Bonnie. But now, his voice box, certainly damaged by water and liquid of the same color as late dusk, squeezed in something purely bitter. The humans were living their lives and looked so kind and jolly, but the doll knew for sure, that every one of them, no matter, how happily they smiled, was a curious, sick, endlessly powerful abomination deep inside. Toys had to live among them and watch their precious kids growing up into those abominations, too.

The thought made Woody shudder from head to toes. Would Andy's dad torture him, if he had acknowledged the truth before his passing? Did Andy become like *the human*, too? Would *Bonnie* become like this?

He could not be sure. He did not want to check on it, either.

Buzz caught his friend's tensed mood and hugged him tightly. He knew, what the other thought about, because it was on his mind, too.

"We can stay here." said he.

Woody sighed. That was exactly the thing he would have appreciated the most. But they were neither humans nor even animals to have a privilege to stay stray.

The human was right - they were things. They felt pain, lived and breathed, but the elements were more harmful to them, than to actual living beings. Buzz needed to have his batteries charged and vital parts protected from rains. Woody

himself was made of cloth, which absorbed moist, and vinyl, which, as he knew by now, could hardly stand higher or lower temperatures...

...hotitssohotmyfacemyfaceburnsitssohotcantseecantsee...

...without a thought, Woody put his hand on eyes. Worst of all, even if blind with glassifyed or frozen face, or insane due to short-circuited electronics, or unable to move because of missing limbs and broken joints, they both would continue to *live*. There was no escape.

"We can't." stuttered Woody. "The weather. The batteries. The humans around. Somebody will find and separate us, sooner or later."

Buzz frowned. The purely practical words scared him. He expected the Sheriff to say something about their kid or friends, but now, Woody considered only the well-being of two of them. That was a way of a space ranger who ended up alone on the inhabitable planet, but not Woody the leader of Andy's toys. Buzz agreed with him, but the possibility of returning to the humans, even to Bonnie, caused chills in his wires. He could not remember, when he was afraid of not others being hurt, but himself, before.

They both had changed. Buzz hoped, they would have enough time to get into their old selves - if it was even possible.

The outside world was getting darker.

"So... We have to find home?" asked Buzz.

"I don't see a better way." said Woody quietly, not turning away from his knees. "At least, to let the guys know. *He* may probably go for them too."

"Do you think, he survived?" Buzz wondered aloud, before thinking.

The human did not show any signs of life when they jumped out of the window, and there was so much blood...

"I know it!" Suddenly, Woody jerked up with a yelp. "I saw *him* returning home! I've only managed to get his... His..." Woody choked on the word with a stiff back.

Buzz put his hand on the cowboy's shoulder. It barely helped: Woody began to hyperventilate with glassy eyes and bared teeth, shaking with his whole body.

"I've done it... And he's alive... And he's there..." He muttered like crazy. Suddenly, he cletched to Buzz's shoulders and looked straight at him. "We *have* to leave!!!"

"Sure, sure!" said Buzz and embraced the trembling rag torso tightly. Woody's breathing became slightly more steady. Still, the beast was wounded, thus way more dangerous, and Buzz could not help but shudder at the possibility of meeting *him* again. "We'll leave. Any idea, where?"

"It's south of San-Francisco. Our region. Andy had a map..." Woody winced on their previous owner's name, but quickly got himself together, not allowing the insane thoughts to get over his mind again. There was no time for this. "I remember. The map."

He wriggled out of Buzz's grip, broke the nearest dry branch and fell on his knees. The space ranger watched him with something between awe and pride, as the cowboy began to scratch on a dusty ground.

"The city..." He made a large circle, and then a long stroke down. "The southern cluster. Oakhill... Town? Quarter? Whatever, it was called this." The smaller circle, then, a stripe to the right. "Our quarters." The another small circle. "The roads were mostly straight. If we head to the east, we'll get there." With a sigh, Woody straightened up and looked at Buzz with a wry, but proud smile.

Buzz felt his own face distorting in an almost forgotten expression. Despite everything, *he* did not succeed at breaking the Sheriff completely.

The only thing that was left out was the distance and the fact, that the "quarters" were full of houses and humans. However, it could wait. For now, they had to get out of *this* area, as far, as they could reach in a single night.

"Smart thinking, Sheriff." said Buzz. "I've once covered twenty one blocks successfully, remember?"

To his joy, at last, Woody's smile widened, and the familiar warm sparkle returned into his eyes for the first time.

"How could I forget?"

"Then, let's not waste our time!"

Woody followed the space ranger, who looked out of the bush carefully, but with strong determination. The night had finally embraced the earth, and the peaceful moon reflected on the plastic helmet and blue eyes. Woody caught himself staring at the ranger, and he was too tired to hide it.

Not that there was a need to hide it, after all.

Chapter 6 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/138484315)

---LOG 11---

PURPOSE: Other sensing capabilities

Both subjects demonstrate the ability of sensing touch and pain without having anatomic features for it. Smelling and tasting abilities require not only nerves, but also moist, which both subjects lack as well.

TEST SUBJECT: S1

S1 was told to describe it's sensations.

Test 1: Olfaction.

Rose essence: "Very pleasant."

Note: S1 mentioned it reminding about someone, but abruptly stopped and denied answering further questions on the topic. Electricity was applied to S2 for 5 times. S1 insists, that the memory was connected only to the human family.

Roast chicken: "Not sure. Pleasant, maybe."

Burnt match: "Terrifying."

Burnt plastic: "Terrifying."

Note: S1 mentions not liking the smell of anything connected with fire in general.

Tobacco: "Disgusting."

Vanilla: "Pleasant."

White musk: "Not sure, but I like it for some reason, a lot."

Note: when asked for a reason, S1 mentions S2. S2 physically does not have any smell.

Ambergris: "Nice."

Human musk: "Disgusting."

Note: The answer is unexpected given the S1 strong connection to humans.

Biological liquids: "Not sure. Nothing."

Result: S1 is capable of feeling smells. The associations each smell gives are different to humans' most possibly because of S1 different nature.

Test 2: Taste

Every example: Nothing.

Result: S1 is incapable of feeling taste.

Note: S1 mentions the incapability and unnecessity of eating as well.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

S2 was told to describe its sensations. S2 asked to not put the examples close to it, because it sensed them well from farther distance. The request is granted.

Test 1: Olfaction

Rose essence: "Nice."

Note: S2 does not mention any associations with a human family until being specifically asked about it.

Roast chicken: "Good."

Note: S2 mentions home.

Burnt match: "Terrifying."

Burnt plastic: "Terrifying."

Note: S2 openly panics at the examples and mentions being afraid of fire-connected smells.

Tobacco: "Disgusting."

Note: Given S2 form and the age it was manufactured, the reaction is unexpected. Probably, it is connected to the self-preservation instinct (?) - cotton absorbs cigarette tar.

Vanilla: "Nice."

White musk: "Nice."

Ambergris: "Pleasant."

Note: S2 seems to especially like the example, but does not explain the reason until being threatened to get S1 electrocuted. Then, S2 mentions associations with S1. S1 does not have its own smell.

Human musk: "Disgusting, scary."

Note: The reaction is surprisingly strong for a thing connected to humans.

Biological liquids: "Not sure."

Result: S2 is capable of feeling smell. The associations each smell gives are different to humans' most possibly because of S2 different nature.

Test 2: Taste

Every example: "Nothing."

Result: S2 is incapable of feeling taste.

Note: Like S1, S2 mentions the incapability and unnecessity of eating.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

Both subjects are capable of sensing smells, but do not feel taste. The reason for it may be because they do not have to eat, cannot be poisoned and lack their own bodily liquids (saliva is necessary for feeling taste). The smell of food gives both subjects associations with home at best. The lack of reaction on biological odors can be explained by the subjects' physical nature (the reaction on it is connected with hormones). The capability of associating smells with a person is mentioned. S2 seems to be better at smelling than S1, which could be possibly explained by its padding, which absorbs smells.

Side note: S2 seems to have a very good olfaction because its reaction to the human musk example was downright inadequate. I have to lessen my physiological reactions during tests on S2 somehow.

I really don't like how it reacts on a smell and a taste of blood too, despite insisting on not feeling them. This grin is just not right.

The toys followed the roads, hiding in shadows and avoiding human territory at all costs. The latter was the hardest part: the humans' territory was *everywhere*. Small or larger houses went along every street and were so similar to each other, that only Woody's sense of direction and a vague memory of Andy's map told them, that they were on a more or less right way. But it could only help so much.

Buzz, full of electric energy, felt himself fine and kept his usual quick pace. The rag doll, however, was not so good. Woody tried to catch up with the ranger, but it was becoming harder and harder, and soon, he just stumbled behind, gasping for air as quietly as he could. Even longer legs did not help. Something was wrong with his padding, although it was dry and fully inside. It irritated the cowboy to no end, but he could not stop the black void surrounding his vision and sickening heaviness in the head.

"Alright, five blocks are done!" said Buzz. "I believe, we'll manage to cover at least three more until dawn. Woody, are you sure, we're going the right way?"

There was no answer. Buzz stopped on the spot. When was the last answer even? He turned around and saw the pile of rag huddling to itself in the grass.

Without a second thought, he ran back to the doll. Woody was choking, staring in front of himself without a single thought in the eyes.

"Holy Nova..." With the words, Buzz dragged the cowboy to the hedge of the previous house. There, he pinned him down by shoulders, to straighten the torso and allow air to get back into stuffing.

That was the mistake.

"Get away from me!!!"

Woody inhaled with all his might and suddenly kicked with both his legs. The boot hit straight into Buzz's stomach. The ranger growled and shifted off with an immense guilt flooding his mind. He knew the reason, it was burnt into his microschemes forever. The only way he could imagine was to keep hands to himself and calling the cowboy's name over and over. *The human* would never do this.

That took several gut-wrenching minutes. At last, Woody got his breathing, but Buzz was not sure about his mind, because he only saw a shuddering back.

"...B-buzz?"

The voice sounded pitifully.

"That's me, Woody. Only me. No one's around."

Woody sighed and rubbed his eyes, still not turning to the ranger.

"I'm sorry... I thought it was..."

"I know." said Buzz bitterly. "A punch for a punch, huh?"

By the gloomy smirk, he knew, that the cowboy did not hold any grudge against him. At last, Woody sat up and looked straight at the ranger. His eyes and cheeks were unnaturally glossy, so it was obvious, that three more quarters were out of question.

"There's something with my stuffing." stammered Woody some time later, which both spent sitting by one of the trunks near the abandoned bird's nest. "Can't breathe like before, and... It wasn't so bad yesterday."

"I have my guesses." said Buzz, secretly relieved, that Woody raised the topic himself. The last thing he wanted was to ask direct questions. "We'll have to change it as soon as we get home."

"That'd be nice." said Woody quietly and tucked his knees under his chin, so he would not have to see his own body.

Probably, Buzz did not catch this yet, but Woody felt a funny metallic smell coming from him. The water did not rinse all the blood...

...HATEYOUTEARYOUAPARTYOUBASTARDILLKILLYOURIPYORFACEHATEYOU...

...away from his insides, and the cleaner parts now had rust on them. How would he even show himself at home?

"Hey." Buzz softly shook his shoulder. "They won't even notice. I'll deal with it."

Instead of answering, Woody simply leaned to the green plate. If Buzz said so, then, there was no need of doubting it.

"But next time, if you're tired, tell me as soon as possible, okay? We have enough time on our hands to have a small rest."

Woody nodded. Buzz was right. The small rest would had been so much less time-consuming, than this... His own weakness, the shameful reflex and the fact, that even *this* led to draining tears, disgusted him no less than his dirty cotton. Buzz had a patience of a saint to deal with him so gently.

The night was still over the town.

"Let's cover at least an another quarter." suggested Woody.

Buzz stood up and looked out to the street. The eastern sky had already got a mauve hue.

"No, cowboy. The dawn began." Hearing the groan beside, Buzz added: "Don't you blame yourself, I have to keep the charge too! We were moving too fast."

Woody raised his face with such a usual half-surprised, half-annoyed expression, that Buzz's wires got almost hot with electricity.

"How had you gone for twenty-one, then?!"

"Well, I had a good enough reason." Buzz chuckled and returned to the position nearby the cowboy. "Which sits right there now."

"You're unbelievable." Woody pushed Buzz's shoulder jokingly. Then, he laid onto the same shoulder.

Buzz could not believe it, but, at last, he felt just as happy, as in Andy's room.

---LOG 12---

PURPOSE: Studying the reboot differences

TEST SUBJECT: S1

Unlike S2, S1 is purposed to work in different language modes and is able to be rebooted. The main purpose of the investigation is to learn, how it affects S1 personality.

Test 1: Full reboot (set to "Demo").

Result: S1 stays inanimated even after the electricity applied to S2 for 3 times.

Note: S2 demonstrates higher distress signs which are not connected to being electrocuted.

Test 2: Spanish mode.

Result: S1 stays inanimated after the electricity applied to S2 for 1 time. After it, S1 becomes animated, shows extreme hostility signs, swears and scolds (?) the investigator.

Note: "Wow, he seems to recognize me." - S2 quote.

Test 3: French mode.

Result: S1 stays inanimated after the electricity applied to S2 for 2 times. After it, it becomes animated and shows hostility signs.

Test 4: Italian mode.

Result: S1 stays inanimated after the electricity applied to S2 for 2 times. After it, S1 becomes animated, shows hostility signs and scolds (?) the investigator.

Test 5: German mode.

Result: S1 stays inanimated after the electricity applied to S2 for 2 times. After it, it becomes animated and shows extreme hostility signs.

Test 6: Chinese mode.

Result: S1 stays inanimated after the electricity applied to S2 for 2 times. On the 3rd time S1 becomes animated and shows extreme hostility signs.

Test 7: Japanese mode.

Result: S1 stays inanimated after the electricity applied to S2 for 2 times. After it, S1 becomes animated and scolds (?) the investigator.

Side note: it sounded very politely even if very aggressively, I must say.

Test 8: Russian mode.

Result: similarly to "Spanish" test, S1 becomes animated after the electricity applied to S2 for 1 time, shows extreme hostility signs, swears and scolds (?) the investigator simultaneously.

Test 9: Norwegian mode.

Result: S1 stays inanimated after the electricity applied to S2 for 1 times. After it, it becomes animated, shows extreme hostility signs, swears and tries to manhandle the investigator's hand.

Test 10: Sweden mode.

Result: S1 S1 stays inanimated after the electricity applied to S2 for 2 times. After it, it behaves like in the previous test.

Note: S2 insists on not meeting "Russian", "Norwegian" and "Sweden" S1 before.

Tests 11-N: Other languages mods.

Result: Delayed due to S2 condition.

Test 11.5: US English mode.

Result: S1 immediately became animated and showed signs characteristical for its usual "personality".

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

S1 demonstrates the ability to become animated in every language mode (except "default"). Changing of a mode provokes changing of a "personality" along with S1 speaking language. Each "personality" shows compassion to S2 and becomes animated after S2 being treated with electricity for 2 times on average. It is unclear, if it is connected to the subjects' relationships and the "US English" personality. The "demo" mode is exceptional one because it does not show signs of compassion or being animated at all.

Note: S2 is currently unable to endure more than 18 electrical shocks in a row: it became "unconscious" on the 19th one.

Camera note: S2 became animated in 3 hours after the end of experiment. Both subjects do not show intentions to escape. S1 looks noticeably more distressed than before during the rest time.

The day began with a dog's nose invading the bush. Buzz, who just managed to fall asleep, jumped at the giant dark thing right in front of him and instinctively kicked it with a boot. The thing disappeared with an offended yelp.

"What's wrong, Max? Found a chipmunk?" A human's voice boomed from outside.

Buzz shifted deeper, closer to Woody, who started to awake.

"I wanna see a chipmunk!" said the much higher voice.

"Okay, Amy, let's have a look..."

Both voice box and batteries fell down to their owners legs. The whole bush shifted. Buzz felt, how his friend's hands trembled on his arm, and he could swear, that his own ones were not better.

Just as the large hand appeared, Woody snapped. Swiftly, he jumped on Buzz's plate and bit the human's middle finger.

"Ouch! Oh, f... Sorry, dear, the chipmunk doesn't want to befriend us."

"But Dad...!"

"Come on, let's not bother it."

The heavy steps disappeared. The toys were still, mortified by the sudden intrusion. Woody breathed heavily, looking at the branches in full alert.

"Clear." He said in a couple of minutes and went down from Buzz's chest at last.

Without extra words, both quickly crawled deeper inside the hedge, away from the road.

It had to be a weekend, because human voices were everywhere, from both sides of the shrubs. Adults, children, dogs, even music. Two toys could only sit in a middle of it, close to each other, not daring to speak out loud or even whisper. The sleep became impossible as well: it was simply too dangerous to relax. It went on until high noon, then the evening. Only by the night, the humans dissipated at last, and the voices disappeared behind the closed doors.

Then, both could breath out at last.

"So, now we're chipmunks." Buzz snickered gloomily.

"I wish we were them." said Woody. He cautiously went to the hedge end. "Coast is clear. No wonder there was so much noise."

Buzz quietly went closer to the cowboy, hiding behind him. His color was still too bright, even with all the dirt in scratches.

"Oh." he said, as he saw the dozen of boxes on the grass in front of the house. "The yard sale."

"Yeah..." Woody shook his head, trying to get rid of a certain memory, which faded significantly over time, but still hurt. "Probably, there's some stuff left."

"What do you mean?" Buzz frowned.

His own thoughts about "stuff" scared him, as he felt a phantom of smooth and clean sintepon, which belonged to the poor unknown doll, on his hands.

"A road atlas or some other map." mumbled Woody to Buzz's great relief, despite a spark of a different thought in the cowboy's eyes.

They waited until the yard lights went out and all the windows gone black. Then, both observed the path from opposite sights and sprinted to the first card box. Woody looked inside.

"A cup set. Useless."

The second box had several books inside. Woody scowled at them.

"Useless."

"Are you sure?" Buzz could not hold a snicker.

"Oh yes. We need a map, not highly doubtful philosophy."

"Roger." Buzz looked inside of the next box. "Nothing, just broken slinky."

"Slinky?!" Woody jolted.

"Slinky spring, not Slinky Dog."

"Oh, thank manufacturer..."

The other boxes had the similar things no one had wanted even for free in the whole previous day. But one of the last boxes appeared to be a treasure chest.

Woody hardly held a yup at the pocket road map hidden under several pulp fiction novels. The map was dated 2000, no wonder, humans did not pay attention to it. But for toys, it had more than enough information about the area.

"Buzz!" He called quietly. "Found it!"

"Great!" The ranger called back from the last unobserved box. "I've found something too, have a look!"

Woody grumbled under his nose and looked around to make sure no one could notice them. Then, he dragged the precious booklet to the ranger.

"What's this? We've found the map, we have to..." Woody stopped abruptly at the thing Buzz pointed at.

In the box, there was a plush puppy. Relatively new, in a very good condition.

"Something's wrong with them." said Buzz uncertainly. Woody did not respond, because he could see, what was wrong, by the first glance.

The almost new toy was completely lifeless.

Chapter 7 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/138697339)

All toys knew from their "birth", that staying still in front of humans was a question of their survival. Woody remembered following the very first instinct to not reveal himself no matter what. Buzz had a memory of it too, although he preferred to call it "hyper-sleep". They would certainly follow it back then, on the playground, if only they knew, that they had been watched.

But usually, toys came alive as soon as the humans were out of sight. Staying frozen when surrounded by other toys or even alone was a very bad sign.

"Hey, partner? Are you there?" Woody called for a puppy without a real hope.

The puppy just stared to the box side.

"Maybe, they're too new?" Buzz wondered aloud.

"No one gives out the new toy for free." said Woody. "And even for new ones, this isn't normal at all."

His shoulders stiffened, as one of the probable reason appeared in his mind...

...cantstayherecantleavewhatsgoingonhowmuchtimebuzzwhereareyougetmeoutpleasesomebodyletmeout...

...Instinctively, he moved his hand, to make sure, that Buzz was here. It was stupid, he knew, but he just needed to be reassured right now. Buzz, in his turn, took the hand absentmindedly, frozen by memories as well.

"Who could have done it?" muttered the ranger, not sounding like himself at all. "Humans? Their kid?"

Some toys were not played or played with only for a short period of time. It all depended on a kid the toy ended up with. It could be not so bad, if the toys in the room were friendly enough. Andy himself had plenty of them: Woody tried his best to help those small toys to feel if not needed, then, at least, appreciated and comfortable. But some still became like this: went into the deepest toy mode despite the whole room's support.

This, however, was the only reason other toys could affect somehow. If a toy had experienced anything they could count as traitorous, and it had been coming from the human they loved, the consequences would be the same, and no toy in the world could help it.

Both alive toys by the box could not be sure about the exact reason. They only knew, that, probably, it was permanent.

And that the toy was a clean *stuffed* animal.

Buzz looked at Woody hesitantly. Woody looked back, even more so. They were thinking about the same thing. After a minute of silence, they shook their heads simultaneously and quickly got on the way to the shelter as far as they could with the booklet only.

They could not know, that shortly after their disappearance the toy dog blinked, clearing his eyes, and curled up in confusion. Still groggy, he could not realize, why the sudden nightmarish vision followed by someone's immense guilt brought him back hope and will to live again.

---LOG 13---

PURPOSE: Studying the prolonged isolation effect.

Preparation: Vacuum test was performed on S2 to even the results of the previous test.

Result: S2 lost consciousness after 50s. The results of the previous test are updated. The air was provided after placing the container into the separate room. The additional cameras and locks were added. The subjects were left for 7 days.

Side note: hope they won't turn off the electricity while I'm on vacation.

Day 1:

Both subjects show clear distress signs. Both seem to call for each other. At night, however, no one tries to break the locks and leave the containers. Both subjects spend the night looking at the exit doors.

Day 2:

S1 looks more distressed than usual. It spends the day pacing around the cage and looking at the exit door. S2 shows higher than average distress signs and goes around the container. No one tries to break the lock. Both subjects spend the night similarly to Day 1.

Day 3:

Both subjects demonstrate less distress. S1 seems to study the lock, as well as S2. By the night, both subjects try to leave their containers. S1 is unsuccessful at breaking the lock. S2 seems to guess how to break the first lock because it gets electrocuted by the safety mean.

Day 4:

S1 is persistent on the lock breaking. S2 gets electrocuted for 8 times, then it lays in a container corner. By the end of the day, S1 manages to get hold of the lock and gets electrocuted by a safety mean.

Day 5:

S1 repeats the lock breaking attempts for 5 times. S2 repeats the same for 1 time. For the remaining time, both subjects stay in the corners of their containers. S1 keeps looking on a door to the utility room. S2 takes the fetal position and noticeably shakes.

Day 6:

Both subjects do not attempt to leave their containers. S1 sits still with its head on its knees. S2 remains in its position and stops shaking.

Day 7:

Both subjects keep their positions of Day 6 and do not move.

Day 8:

S1 did not become animated after the investigator entered the room. It was revealed by the closer look that S1 took the "toy" facial expression despite staying in an uncharacteristical position. S1 did not react to electricity, battery removal and a lit match applied to its plate.

S2 did not become animated after the investigator entered the second room. S2 remained in its initial fetal position with the "toy" expression. S2 did not react to electricity, paper cutter and a burn on its elbow.

S1 and S2 became animated soon after S2 was returned into its usual cage. Both subjects showed signs of high comfort and distress simultaneously.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

The prolonged isolation leads to both subjects entering the "toy" state. The most probable cause is high emotional stress. Both subjects did not show any reaction to usual threats in the state.

Side note: by far, that was eeriest experience I've ever had, and I had a lot. Those toys, as toys, looked just... wrong, for whatever reason.

The toys hid in the bush a couple of houses away from the yard sale. Just as they felt more or less safe, the recognition hit both of them.

Woody fell down on the ground with a hand on his head. Buzz sat too, feeling too sick of himself to stand up.

"How could we..." stuttered Woody to the patch of grass.

"Yeah..." Buzz stared dully at his hands.

The thought was not a crime on itself, but both felt themselves like criminals. Marauders, murderers, cannibals. They had never thought that even a small consideration like *this* could enter their heads, until they had met *the human*.

Even if done for a greater goal, some things just could not had been undone. Woody remembered the rabbit, who was torn apart in front of him - he had to help it, but he had not even tried to get free from his wire shackles. Buzz remembered the doll, who he himself destroyed in order to keep the masquerade. Was all of that worth it? Probably, yes, but fifteen minutes ago they thought about the same thing without *the human* watching them. And now, they could not look into each other's eyes.

"If I ever think about it again, you're free to kick my batteries out." said Buzz barely audibly.

"Same, but for the voice box." said Woody grimly. "We must be better than this."

"We *used* to be better."

Woody sighed. At last, Buzz spoke aloud the fact, that they both tried to hide from.

The doll shifted closer to the action figure and patted his shoulder, hoping, it would ease the mood. Buzz did not say anything, but by his pose, which became more relaxed, Woody deducted, that it was a right thing to do.

He dragged the road atlas closer to them by a spur. Earlier, would be impossible: even being a toy from older times, Woody was still made to be more or less safe for children to play, so the spurs were harmless. After the last night of their capture, they were no more. The cowboy took care of it.

"Let's have a look." said he and opened the booklet. Buzz looked at it a bit more eagerly than it was necessary: he was relieved to get some less devastating things to think about.

The search for their home location took a while. The area was much larger than the toys could even imagine, and mostly it consisted in numerous houses and straight streets which looked awfully similar to each other. Eventually, as it became clear, that it was impossible to get their destination by the first look, they began to actually read street names. The ones they were searching for were "Sycamore St." and "Elm St.", and they found at least three of each on different pages. Only when Buzz accidentally found the word "Oakhill" among all the other words, they were able to get their place. The exact position of Elm St. and Sycamore St., which they had remembered from the last day with Andy, was on the next page.

"Twenty quarters." Woody rubbed his forehead. In their condition and all the humans around...

"Could be worse." said Buzz. "My batteries are good, but we'll go at your pace."

"Hope, they won't de-charge by then." Woody huffed. "And rains won't start."

"I can carry you if you'll feel unwell. If you don't mind." Buzz looked unsurely at the rag doll.

"Nah. If it's you, I don't mind."

Woody's voice box almost melted at Buzz's sincerely grateful smile.

How could this fool of a ranger even doubt, after everything they went through together? If there was anyone left in the world, whom Woody could still fully trust, it was only him.

But, just as they leaned closer to each other without even realizing it, and he felt his cotton tightening in something both familiar and new...

...stopitstopitswrongscaryawfulletmefreezehearmehearme...

...the bolt of shame pierced his voice box almost painfully. Buzz certainly noticed it, as he backed away with a pitiful stare, which hurt no less.

"...I'm sorry." mumbled Woody, hiding his face. "It's not you, it's... It's just..."

"Don't apologize." said Buzz, lost in his own dreadful memories. "I know."

Woody just shrank tighter, as his eyes began to burn. It was unfair. He trusted Buzz, he *loved* him, he did not lie about it then and now, and Buzz had never failed him, but even a slightly deeper show of it became impossible. *The human* robbed him even from this.

He felt a cautious touch of a plastic hand on his own and grabbed it desperately.

"We'll go at your pace, remember?" said Buzz softly.

"Yeah... And yours, too." Woody let out a shaking sigh.

They returned to the road atlas. It was way too much of a burden, so Woody tore away the pieces they needed and tucked them into his empty holster. For once, he did not secretly miss the absent gun.

The night was still high, so the toys managed to cover a couple of quarters, before first cars began to appear.

LOG 14
PURPOSE: The interview.
TEST SUBJECTS: S1, S2

Interviewer: Arthur Warren.

TRANSCRIPTION

AW: ...okay, let's start.

S2: Why did you return?.. No! I'm sorry! Sorry!!!

AW: S2, once again, you're not allowed to have a word until I ask you.

(S2 looks at the AW's hand on the controller and nods.)

AW: Very well. Now. S1, you were in the "toy" mode when I came and did not go out of it until I brought S2. How can you describe your state?

S1: I don't remember.

AW: Are you sure?

S1: Positive.

(S2 screams from applied electricity. S1 changes its expression towards disgust (?))

S1: I am sure. You torturing my friend for the sake of a torture won't change it.

AW: S1, don't forget your position. Noted. S1, what did you feel before entering the "toy" state?

S1: Despair. Even more than before.

AW: Can you explain, why?

S1: I could not know what you have done to Woody and if he's alive, could not escape and did not know if you'll return.

AW: Noted. S1, if you knew I would return, would it change something?

S1: I would try to break the lock again, so it would electrocute me to the end.

(S2 looks at S1 with a complicated expression, but does not interrupt the interview.)

AW: S1, have you had such thoughts before?

S1: Only when I've acknowledged myself being a toy and until Woody took me out of it.

AW: ...Okay. Noted. S1, what did you feel when I've brought S2 into its place?

S1: I felt that I was able to live again.

AW: Thank you. S2, you were in the "toy" mode when I came and did not go out of it until I brought you to S1. How can you describe your state?

S2: I can't remember it either. I'm sorry!!! Don't do this, I really can't!

AW: S2, what did you feel before entering the "toy" state?

S2: I didn't want to live.

AW: Can you explain, why?

(S2 inhales and exhales for a couple of times, which it did not do previously during interviews.)

S2: I was scared, cold and hurt. I could not know if Buzz was alive and more or less well, and if you were going to return.

AW: Noted. S2, if you knew I would return, would it change anything?

S2: Nothing, I guess. I didn't want to live. You would certainly destroy me, if I didn't come alive in front of you, so why bother?.. Sorry! It wasn't a question, I'm sorry!!!

AW: S2, have you had such thoughts before?

S2: For some times.

AW: For what reasons?

S2: (inhales and exhales for three times) When I was abandoned by the kid I've belonged to, in the Sid's house when I thought that Buzz has left me, and when I was taken by a toy collector.

AW: S2, so, can you say, those thoughts are connected with abandonment?

S2: Maybe, yes. Didn't think about it.

AW: Noted. S2, what did you feel when I've put you into place with S1 intact?

S2: (inhales and exhales) I felt eager to live again.

Note: S2 seems to calm itself down by breathing. It is not clear if it is a consequence of previous tests or S1 tutoring which was recorded on the camera.

AW: Why so?

S2: (lowers its head) Because Buzz was there. He's the only one I'll continue to live for.

(S1 looks uncharacteristically agitated, but does not interrupt the interview)

AW: S2, would your kid make you feel this way?

S2: I doubt it.

AW: Noted. S2, did you remember yourself after you were played with by a kid?

S2: Yes.

AW: S1, the same question.

S1: The same answ... (S1 looks at the hand on the controller) Yes.

AW: S1, in case you forgot, your cooperation is necessary for S2 wellbeing. S2, same for you.

S1: Roger that.

S2: (quietly) Sure. Of course. Sorry.

AW: S2, what did you feel when being played with?

S2: I liked it. If the kid was happy, I was happy too.

AW: S2, were you ever being played with by an adult?

(S2 frowns)

S2: ...well, yes, Mom used to join Andy from time to time.

AW: What did you feel then?

S2: She wasn't in a mood for playing, I believe. She was mourning Dad, so I felt that too.

AW: So, do I get it correctly, you get the emotions of the human you're being played with by?

(S2 shows clear signs of fear)

S2: M-maybe? Yes? Sorry! Yes, I, I do. Yes.

AW: S2, you look more scared than usual. Why?

S2: I don't like where it goes. Not sure, why, but I don't like it at all. Sorry!

AW: Noted. S1, what do you feel when being played with by a kid?

S1: That's an interesting question. I can't tell for sure if I get the emotions, but I appreciate the action.

(S1 voice is unnaturally more loud and optimistic. S1 throws side glances to S2)

AW: S1, what exactly do you mean by action?

S1: The flow of the imagination. When you catch it, you can feel like you actually do something on your own. That makes me happy, and the kid too.

AW: Even if you would not like it in your animated state?

(S1 changes its expression and tone of the voice.)

S1: I'm not sure if I understood the meaning of the question.

AW: For example, what if the kid makes you to shoot down S2?

S1: This. I get it. It happened for several times, we talked it over later, so, I guess, no offence.

S2: For sure.

AW: Noted. S1, have you ever been played with by an adult?

S1: Only once, with Andy, when he grew up.

AW: How did you feel about it?

S1: The same. He was my owner, after all, so him growing up didn't change anything.

AW: I see. Noted. That's all I wanted to know by now. S1, you obviously want to ask something. You may.

S1: Why would our feelings during playtimes bother you?

AW: Because of your potential. You and others like you, if there's anyone, could be useful therapy tools for people with mental conditions...

S2: (quietly) What.

AW: ...and most, if not all, people, for you know, have them. I have to study you and collect enough information before publishing the full report. Playtimes seem to be the good way to create a bond between a toy and a human, which would be helpful for the therapy. S1, did I answer your question?

S1: Yes. You did.

AW: Good. Thank you both for the interview.

(End of the recording)

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

Both subjects seem to have different depth of the "toy" state. Extreme stress and abandonment (?) make them become unresponsive and unconscious yet still looking as a toy. The "toy" mode seems to be some kind of protective mechanism from both physical and psychological hazards. That warrants further investigation, as well as "bonding" over playtimes and the way playtimes affect both subjects in "toy" and animated states.

Note: S1 became more emotionally unstable. Batteries changing is delayed in order to keep it cooperative. S2 was uncharacteristically quiet after the interview and seemed less arrogant and more frightened than after the previous ones.

Side note: It seems to finally get where its place is.

Chapter 8 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/138905008)

Notes:

(See the end of the chapter for notes (#chapter_8_endnotes) .)

With a map, the trip became slightly easier. At least, the toys knew, where exactly they had to go. But it did not make it faster or any less dangerous.

The shrubs provided a good enough cover from the direct sunlight in a daytime, but even in the shadows, it was still hot. After another day, when it was thirteen quarters left, Woody began to loathe his own stuffing. It felt sticky and disgustingly heavy, and the smell became even worse. To the rag doll's great embarrassment, Buzz felt too now, and, although the ranger seemed to not really mind it, Woody hesitated to get closer to him on his own. Not to mention his breathing, which became an endless trouble.

Worst of all, the smell lured animals and thus, humans.

The dogs checked on the shrubs, where the toys hid in a daytime, continuously. Buzz hit them with his fist and boots, and, if it wasn't enough, Woody used spurs. Not that they enjoyed it - the dogs did not deserve their noses being beaten or scratched - but there was no other way. The adult humans did not check on *something* in their hedges and told their children to stay away from them as well, but Woody and Buzz knew, that it was a matter of time they would be exposed. They had to keep going, no matter what.

Buzz, still being high on lithium, did not have a strong urge to sleep, at least, for a couple more days, so Woody used an opportunity to take short naps at nights, while being carried by the ranger after yet another shortage of breathing. But the tiredness continued to grow on them both.

One more quarter. Then, another one. And another one, until the sky grew pink with sunrise.

"Eight more, and we'll get there." said Buzz, checking with a piece of a map.

"With our speed, that means two days at best." said Woody. "If nothing happens."

"I'll take care of it." said Buzz confidently.

Woody did not respond. They both could only do so much, and it required to stay hidden. Hours of huddling together, watching out for dogs, rodents and humans without a stop, jumping at every sound. He yearned for the days, when they foolishly went outside with the whole gang at days and nights, barely bothering about getting noticed.

Back then running on the edge was... A sort of unusual fun. Rex would panic at the silliest possible reason, Mr. Potato Head and Hamm would bicker like always, Jessie would do something borderline stupid and Buzz would join her, while Slinky would be worried about everything and Woody would try to get the whole mess together...

"I miss them." murmured Woody. "Our guys."

Buzz glanced at the cowboy. The way of how their thoughts became synced after the time in captivity was still an eerie wonder to him.

"Me too." Buzz sighed. "Getting into the toy box would be nice."

"Didn't you hate how overcrowded it was?" Woody smiled wryly.

"Come on, you hated it too. Still better than this." Buzz waved his hand around the shrub.

"Yeah, that's right." said Woody. Even having Jessie's spur in his side while trying to sleep in some impossible yoga position he had to assume in the toy heap would be so much better...

Both hoped nothing would stop them on the way home, which was so close already. They hoped to see their friends at least for one more time.

However, both did not even want to think about having to do the job they were made for in the first place.

---LOG 15---

PURPOSE: Studying the "playtime" effect.

TEST SUBJECT: S1

S1 was specifically asked to get into "toy" state and describe its feelings later.

Test 1: Usual playtime activities (pushing buttons, wing spreading, activating the "lasor")

Result: S1 does not show any particular emotion and asks, if it was even considered a "playtime".

Test 2: More personal approach.

Result: S1 becomes uncharacteristically agitated and shows signs of fear. It is unable to describe the feelings even after electricity being applied on S2.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

S2 was specifically asked to get into "toy" state and describe its feelings later.

Test 1: Usual playtime activities (pulling on the string, some handling around)

Result: S2 shows clear signs of fear, but describes the playtime as "the most boring one I've ever had."

Test 2: More personal approach.

Result: S2 shows signs of high distress and fear, describes its feelings as "terrifying" and asks the investigator to not repeat it. The request is ignored for future matters.

TEST SUBJECTS: S1, S2

Test 1: Full playtime.

Result: Both subjects show signs of extreme distress and shut down mentally, when asked to describe their feelings specifically. Since both are unresponsive for more or less clear reasons, the further interrogation is cancelled.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

Both subjects react on playtimes in the "toy" state only if it includes personal approach, which verifies their previous statements. The reaction is coordinated with the playtime specifics. This can be useful for patients dealing with psychological traumas.

Side note: It even won't be illegal, at least for some years. I wonder how it'll affect their "relationships".

Camera note: Both subjects talked for the whole night, showing signs of strong, complicated emotions and trying to reach for each other.

The sun went past zenith and began to lower down. The toys could not wait for the full dusk: evenings were the most fearsome times, when adults returned from their daytime jobs and kids flooded the streets after the midday heat. The toys could only rely on their luck... And the luck proved to be an unreliable force.

Once again, the black and pink wet nose of a curious dog appeared in their hideout. Buzz kicked it on a reflex. But this time, the reflex of the dog was different.

Buzz barely stood quiet, as the jaws cletched on his leg and pulled him to the outside.

...NO!!!NOTAGAIN!DON'TTAKEMENOTAGAIN!!!..

He reached for his friend, and at the last moment, Woody leaped to him and grabbed his elbow with a face distorted in so painfully familiar expression. Buzz clinged on the soft arm with all his joints might, before making himself go still. Woody did it too.

They had to not show their true nature, or everything they had done would be in vain.

The small dog proudly ran to its owner with a plastic toy in its mouth. The human - the kid in his early teens - took the toy in a surprise.

"What's this?"

Buzz kept his cocky grin, despite a chilly terror going through all his wires. The hands. *The hands*.

The kid beamed. The chill became even more paralyzing.

"Hey, that's Buzz Lightyear! Just like the one I had when I was little! Good girl, Sadie!"

Sadie wiggled her tail loyally.

The kid pushed one of the buttons, and it took Buzz an effort to stay frozen.

"Bzzzzzzzeyrrrttzzzzzrsczzzzz"

The kid scowled, as Buzz's batteries went down his legs. He was broken.

"Aw hell, it's busted." muttered the teen, only convincing the ranger even more. The boy tried to move the toy's arm and noticed the flailing doll. He took Woody by the leg with only two fingers and a great disgust on his face.

"Yikes... In which shit it was..."

As the boy tried to take the rag doll away, Buzz made his grip firmer. When the kid tried to uncletch his fingers, he did not let go, hoping, that it would make the human believe, that he was in a really bad condition. That the joints were too rusty, that if he wanted him so badly, then, he would have the dirty doll as well - or only its arm. The thought itself was sickening, but Buzz could do only so much: keep playing on the child's mind and never unlock his finger joints on the soft arm.

It worked. After a several tries, the kid just threw both away to the same bush.

"Let's go, Sadie. It's rubbish."

The dog whined, but obediently followed her master, who sat on a bike and rode away.

Just as he disappeared, Buzz swiftly took Woody under the cover of thick leaves. The doll hesitantly came to life, but did not even move.

"...thank you for not letting me go." muttered Woody in a barely audible voice.

"How could I?" said Buzz in the same manner.

He could see his limbs shaking and feel the warm hands on his body - and hated it so much. Being at the mercy of the large, higher creature.

Now, it felt even more devastating, than after Sid's house, because he knew exactly, what that could mean. He used to think, that Sid was an exception, and he was *new* then. He could not be a space ranger, but he still was a *cool toy*, the

dream of every child. Apparently, he was not anymore. Not with a melted plate, all the scratches and cuts, not with a horrendous sound his voice board gave instead of a proud catchphrase.

He could see Woody thinking about exactly the same thing. The rag doll stared in front of himself, stroking his side under the vest. The vest itself was clean, but the shirt fabric was covered in brownish-red stains. They were hardly noticeable: the pattern and yellow color were visible, if only slightly muddy. Buzz had not even seen them until now. But for the kid they became a huge deal.

"Still want to go home?" asked Woody. He sounded just as empty, as his eyes were.

"Not sure." Buzz admitted with a sigh.

"Me neither."

What was waiting for them there, after all? Andy's toys would greet them, but what about the other half of the room, to whom the new toys were some kind of giveaways even after almost a year together? What would Bonnie or her parents do, if they found them? Throw out as yucky trash?

That seemed to be the most possible fate. But home was the only goal they both had left.

"At least, you'll have your padding changed." said Buzz.

"Yeah, and some spares for you." said Woody. "But what's next?"

"We'll stick together. Until the end." Buzz flinched at the memory of a hellfire in front of his eyes and acidic burn in overheated batteries.

Woody finally got up and gave Buzz a sad smile.

"You know what? You're still a cool toy."

"Not for kids, I guess." Buzz smirked gloomily.

"I didn't mean for kids."

The ranger felt his wires becoming warmer again. Those words, coming from Sheriff Woody, meant a lot for him - even if for humans he was not the stubborn lawman, but just an old and dirty piece of rag.

As the night came at last, they continued on their way.

---LOG 16---

PURPOSE: Studying the "playtime" effect on the "live" state.

TEST SUBJECT: S1.

S1 was specifically asked to not move and not enter the "toy" state while being played with.

Test 1: Usual "playtime" activities.

Result: S1 shows signs of high distress and explains that the usual activities make it feel uncomfortable "at best".

Test 2: More personal approach.

Result: S1 begins to resist in some minutes and stops only after electricity being applied on S2. Some minutes later, S1 enters the "toy" state and becomes animated only after electricity being applied on S2 for 2 times in a row. S1 shows signs of extreme distress and shuts down emotionally (?) until the end of the playtime.

Note: S1 did not show signs of recovery after being returned into its place.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

S2 was specifically asked to not move and not enter the "toy" state while being played with. The safety measures are lessened for experimental purposes (tape is still used).

Test 1: Usual playtime activities.

Result: S2 begins to actively fight the investigator after a harder pull on the string. Its emotions are unclear. After electricity being applied on S1 S2 stops moving and shows extreme distress signs.

Note: for safety reasons, including the risk of destroying S1 by prolonged electricity impact, cuts were made on S2 limbs to make them immovable.

Test 2: More personal approach.

Result: S2 tries to go into the "toy" state shortly after the beginning of the test. Electricity was applied on S1 for 1 time. After that, S2 becomes animated again. S2 shuts up (scratched) off emotionally after 7 minutes and does not recover after being stitched and placed into its cage. By the end of the test a small amount of liquid appeared on S2 face in its eyes area. The liquid was collected for future research.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

"Toy" mode is defined to be a physical/psychological defensive mechanism. Being unable to go still during the playtime made both subjects shut down mentally. Exposure to extreme psychological stress caused S2 to emit some kind of liquid which warrants closer investigation (both subjects lack glands and liquids in general).

Side note: holy Jesus, it can cry?! I've checked on the hygrometer, the humidity is fine, even below normal, it couldn't appear naturally. This thing becomes even more interesting. Not to mention, that it broke down not because of physical pain but mostly psychological one.

Note on liquid: the amount is too small for a proper test. I need to get more of it, when the thing wakes up.

Camera note: Both subjects became animated several hours after the test and barely interacted with each other. S2 seems to be too exhausted for it. S1 sits still with its head on its arms.

Notes:

Warning: there're a couple of even darker chapters ahead :(but there'll be light eventually, I promise

Chapter 9 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/139121473)

The path became excruciatingly slow despite there were just five quarters left.

Woody could tell for sure, that the incident took a great toll on Buzz. He was sure, that the batteries worked well: Buzz held him on his back just as confidently as before, his strokes on the cowboy's shoulders and hugs were still powerful, and there was no sign of haze in the blue eyes. There was something else, instead. The deep fear of the end of their "mission".

Not that Woody could blame him, though. He remembered well the despise in the kid's eyes. If the same one would appear on Bonnie's face, there would be only way left, and he knew, where it led. The fire. They could keep Buzz, probably, but certainly not him. Nobody would even try to repair a torn-apart old toy covered in dirt and blood.

No toy was ever meant to harm a human, especially in such a vicious way. Toys were meant to be played with, and both Buzz and Woody could not stand even that anymore. Were they even toys by now?

The only thought made breathing to become even harder. Still, Woody made himself to follow the ranger, whose pace lost its determination.

Only two quarters were left by the end of the night. Woody began to recognize the area around.

"Nearly there." he said to Buzz, when they took cover for a day. "Ready with your greeting speech?"

"Very funny, cowboy." grumbled Buzz, looking at his feet. "I thought you were."

" 'Hey howdy hey, be not afraid, we won't do you any harm despite we look like we will and don't ask about the blood on me, it was a tough month'." Woody spat out the words biliously. His eyes began to burn, and he rubbed them slightly harder than it was necessary. Not now. He could not break right now, there was no time for it.

"I think we should groom it a bit." Buzz hugged the cowboy, confused, but strangely delighted by a sudden familiar spark.

Woody just snuggled to him and took the ranger's hand. There was only a day and night ahead, and he was afraid. Afraid so much that he wanted to throw up his own voice box.

Buzz knew it. He was afraid about what was coming no less.

Yet, they still had more trivial things to worry about. The sun went up. The cars began to roar. The ground under the toys began to shake slightly under humans' steps and car tires. The town was waking up, which meant more hours of being at high alert.

Just as leaves above moved with a smooth sound, Buzz got ready to fight whatever was going to enter their shelter. Woody took up his leg too, ready for a kick with a spur. The high shadow covered the sun rays, which hit through the leaves.

It was way too high for a dog. The branches moved.

"God, I hope, it's just there and he didn't bury it..."

The voice of a human made the toys squeeze to each other immediately. Again, the same danger, and even going farther from the road did not protect them. Buzz grabbed Woody's arm. The human searched for something in their hedge, and she was getting *closer*.

"If I won't bite in time, whatever happens, freeze." whispered Woody.

Buzz nodded and made his grip stronger.

They did not even have time to react, because the upper branches suddenly spread apart. The full sunshine fell on them, covered by a human figure. In pure astonishment, the middle-aged woman looked at two toys in her hedge.

---LOG 17---

PURPOSE: Getting enough of the liquid example.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

Test 1: Physical impact.

Result: Like in previous experiments, S2 did not produce any liquid even after the impacts which were proved to be most distressing for it.

Test 2: Psychological impact.

Result: S2 shows extreme distress signs and clear fear, but does not emit any liquid.

Test 3: Physical+psychological impact.

S2 was forbidden from entering the "toy" state by a threat of S1 being electrocuted for longer than usual. S1 was specifically asked to watch.

Result: S2 breaks 3 minutes 48 seconds after the beginning of the test. The breaking seems to be involuntary and uncontrollable. The amount of collected liquid is 64 ml (2,16 oz.) which is surprising, giving S2 size. The liquid continued to be emitted even after S2 complete emotional and physical shut down. S1 shows signs of a mental break as well, but does not emit any liquid.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

Enough amount of liquid was acquired. Its production requires severe impact on S2 both mental and physical state. S2 seems to not control it and shows signs of fear of having it in the first place. This warrants further investigation if S2 would be able to answer questions. The question of S1 being able to emit it warrants further research as well.

Side note: Probably, I shouldn't include the specifics of the production into the final report.

LIQUID TESTS RESULTS:

Color: transparent with a slight beige tint.

Odor: odorless.

Litmus test: neutral reaction.

Adhesion: oil-like.

Viscosity: oil-like.

Note: despite being oil-like, the liquid merges well with water, which is physically doubtful.

Side note: no shit, it's collected from a toy! I think, physical laws are useless from now on.

Evaporation temperature: 298K

Flammability: highly flammable.

Side note: some source of energy?

The further research should be provided by a specialized laboratory.

Side note: I wonder how would I explain its origins. Maybe, later.

Camera note: S1 sat for the whole night with its face in hands. S2 begins to show signs of being animated by morning. After it, both subjects seem to have a conversation, although they do not move from their positions.

The woman watched the toys. The toys watched her, although she could not know it.

Woody looked at the human's face, maintaining the frozen smile. It was hard, because all he wanted was to jump up and run away. Or to make the human do it, somehow.

The woman crouched down to them.

"Weird. How did you end up there?"

The *question*. Coming from the human. Only Buzz's tightened hand lock stopped Woody from the learned reaction.

...leave us alone.

He could be in a toy mode, but his mind worked like it was his last time, and it was filled by sheer fright and the single wish. *Leave us alone.*

The woman blinked and shook her head.

"Maybe, the Johanssons played here again." she wondered aloud. "Poor things, you look like you went through something horrible!"

Leave us alone.

Of course, the human could not hear him. Even *then*, *the human* did not hear him begging to stop, although he cried it out loud. The humans never *heard* him, no matter, how he tried to reach for them. By the thoughts, by the phone, by the words, by the screams... His mind began to stumble on itself. The humans should had never heard him, but even if they could, they had never listened... Just as his fellows had...

Meanwhile, the woman noticed something on the boot of the cowboy doll, which was in the particularly miserable condition. It looked like a name. She took the leg of the toy to have a closer look.

LEAVE US ALONE!!!

Unexpectedly, Woody's leg became free at once. The woman jerked back, frowning and holding to her forehead.

"...Oof. I'd better go..."

And so she did. Slightly tottering, she went to the house and disappeared behind the door, with a hand on her head. The thick leaves covered the toys once again.

Buzz let out a deep sigh.

"That was close."

Woody did not reply. He curled on himself, holding his head, unable to stop shuddering. Buzz was right - that was close. He could not even think about what unexplainable force made the human go away, but the feeling behind his eyes was sickening. As if somebody put a thick piece of fiberglass there. Just like before...

...ILLKILLYOU!!!..

...like before the cause of the stains on his body and stuffing. Was it the only way to make himself being actually heard?

The strong, but gentle touch on the back dragged Woody out of the quagmire of the dreadful thoughts. The feeling of fiberglass in his head slowly vanished, as Buzz kept stroking him without an extra word.

"Better?" asked Buzz some silent minutes later.

"Much better." said Woody. He could not find the right words to describe the warm tingling in his voice box, so, instead, he leaned into the ranger's hug. He needed this so much: the gentle support without a hint of judgement or too many words.

"That's good." said Buzz softly.

He turned to the side of the bush, ready again to scare off animals, and so Woody did. The day had just began, with all of its dangers. But this time, until the night, both humans and beasts avoided the certain bushes as if they were cursed.

---LOG 18---

PURPOSE: Interview.

TEST SUBJECTS: S2.

Interviewer: Arthur Warren.

S2 seems to be able to speak coherently. The interview is set in the separate room to lessen the outside influence.

Note: S2 did not show its usual protest against the safety measures.

TRANSCRIPTION

AW: ...recording. S2, I must admit, you behave much better today. What's the reason for it?

S2: (not raising its head) You'd do that anyway.

AW: S2, would you look at me while answering my questions, please?

(S2 obeys. Its face lacks usual expression or any kind of expression whatsoever.)

AW: S2, what can you say about the result of the previous experiment?

S2: ...I don't understand your question. Sorry.

AW: S2, have you ever "cried" previously?

S2: No.

AW: Did you know, that you're able to do this?

S2: No.

AW: You sound and act differently. What's the reason for it?

S2: I'm tired.

AW: Noted. Is it physical fatigue or something else?

S2: Don't know. Like something's gone. Hard to move and speak.

AW: S2, did you feel as tired as now after previous tests?

S2: No.

AW: Do you consider it being connected with... Let's call it "tears"?

S2: Maybe. Don't know. Sorry.

AW: Are you sure?

(S2 nods and begins to fall on side with a "sleepy" expression. AW catches it and puts back into previous position. S2 begins to shake.)

S2: Don't do this!

AW: S2, what do you mean?

S2: You know what! Don't do it again! Please, don't do it...

AW: I don't even touch you, S2.

S2: I can feel it...

(S2 suddenly stops shuddering and hangs its head.)

S2: You will do this, won't you.

AW: I don't even know what are you talking about, S2.

S2: You, humans, always do. No matter, if you hear me or not, I'm just a thing for you to have fun with, I get it...

AW: S2, stop trying to manipulate me.

S2: Or what?! You'll tear me apart or try to drown me again? Or threaten me? Make me feel like a piece of trash? Or everything at once, calling it a "playtime"?! What else are you going to do?!!

AW: Damn. I guess, we won't come to any conclusion with such a condition of yours.

(End of the recording)

S2 was returned into the cage in an hour after the recording. S2 does not show any kind of usual resistance or hostility towards the investigator.

Side note: in fact, it doesn't show anything, only stares at walls. Guess, I've found a way to keep it quiet and tame, at last.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

Liquid production is exhausting for S2, which contributes to the "source of energy" hypothesis. It seems to be a limited/slowly restorable resource, because this time S2 gave out only a very small amount of it before shutting down. S2 behavior resembles this of people with severe psychological traumas. S1 seems to develop the signs too, although never having experienced it itself. It opens the way to use animated toys as a safe educational equipment for students to practice on.

Side note: I hope I didn't break S2 completely, because I need it for further researches, especially on the "tears" source. But not having to bother with restrictive measures as much as before is quite nice.

Still, there's a huge problem with personal investment, but whatever. This thing wanted to be played with, so why not?

Chapter 10 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/139370788)

The basement of an empty house is dark and quiet. Only the moon shines through the single half-opened narrow window, and a small green light blinks on a camera watching the table and two cages. From one of the cage, where the stitched cowboy-shaped rag doll sits with its head on knees, the barely audible strange noise comes. As if something scratches on plastic.

The space ranger, who sits in the other cage half a foot away, raises his head and looks at the cowboy. His blue eyes are hazy and half-empty: the batteries work on their last breath.

"Woody?" asks the ranger quietly. "What are you doing?"

The cowboy turns his head to Buzz, not stopping on his job.

"Sharpening spurs." he says just as quietly.

His dark, almost black in the absence of light eyes are gleaming with something absolutely unnatural for a toy. Buzz does not reply. He knows, what that means.

"He isn't going to destroy us. He wants to reveal us to the world." Woody continues to mutter. "He won't make it, I'll take care."

"You have a plan?"

"Yes. Next time. Save your charge, it'll come handy."

Buzz nods and continues to listen to the plain voice. No wonder, Woody decided to do it - he worked his best to convince the human that he was absolutely submissive, so the human stopped tying his limbs with wire and putting a tape on his mouth for the recent "tests". To be honest, even Buzz believed it - until he saw the first murderous glare towards the human's back.

The plan is pretty smart, but it depends on luck and them not making a single mistake. And it sounds brutal. Sheriff Woody of the past would never even consider doing this. Buzz Lightyear of the past would never agree with it.

But those two toys of the past are gone.

The gentle wind caressed the trees, bushes and grass under them. The moonlight fell on a single-floor yellow house and the white planks of a fence. A couple of its windows were still lit.

"The family is at home." said Woody, looking at them from the bush on the other side of the road. "Damn it..."

He hoped the family would go on some sort of vacation or something like this, like they always did at this time of the year. But they were there, and it made the things increasingly more difficult.

"Maybe, we can try, when they go to sleep?" asked Buzz.

"I don't know. Bon..." Woody stumbled on the name, as the white noise of gibberish filled his head for a second. He shook it off: not now. "...Bonnie became a light sleeper recently, remember?"

The memories of times before *this* became almost transparent after endless suffering. However, Woody could recall, how quiet they had to be at nights since late winter.

"Yes, you're right. We'll scare her." said Buzz.

Woody felt a pang of shame: in the deep fear of all humans, he did not even think about the possibility, and even when he did, it was inherently wrong. If the child had been scared, she would call for parents - and the toys would be screwed. The right thought of a toy would be worrying for Bonnie's wellbeing, not for their own hides.

Maybe, their initial plan to get supplies and run was the best decision for everyone.

The toys waited patiently until the last window turned dark. Then, they made sure, that no car or a human was on a street, and sprinted across the road, towards the white fence surrounding the house. They crawled under shadows to the bushes by the house wall and exhaled in unison. The family had only a cat, who preferred to stay inside, so, *finally*, they were safer, than anywhere before.

"I can't believe it." said Buzz.

"Me too." Woody agreed wholeheartedly, after getting his breath more or less steady. "We've made it. Buzz, do you get it? We've made it!"

He caught Buzz's hand, confused by a strong, long-forgotten feeling, as if his voice box was going to explode not because of despair or unfairness, but in *joy*. Buzz hugged him tightly, obviously holding himself from something... Not for long, though.

The family inside could not know, that in the middle of the night, in their decorative bush two toys were laughing like madmen for the first time in more than a month.

They stopped, just as the realisation hit them. It was not the end, eventually. It was the *beginning* of new troubles.

If the family was at home, as far as Woody could remember their routine, the day was more or less safe for infiltration. Dad and Mom would go to work, while Bonnie would be in the kindergarten - that was, if nothing had changed, and he could not be sure about it. Not to mention, that even a possibility of going out of the safe shelter in a light of the day gave Woody crippling shivers.

But now, it was pleasantly dark and quiet, and Buzz was with him. They had half of the night to take a good rest, without the need to move further.

And, at last, they were far enough from *him* to ever find them.

---LOG 19---

PURPOSE: Researching the moving and liquid production mechanisms.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

Test 1: Removal of the head

Result: Even after a day of rest S2 demonstrates uncharacteristically passive attitude and does not show any kind of resistance, which was shown in the previous similar test.

Test 2: Visual observation.

Note: The tests are being done on the inside.

Result: Nothing resembling of tear glands and vocal cords is found.

Note: There is a human-like mouth cavity, which is doubtful to be manufactured (S2 in "default" state smiles with its mouth closed). Cutting it off is considered to be counter-productive for further researches, which includes interviews.

Test 3: Checking of deeper layers of vinyl in the eyes area.

Result: Nothing unusual is present. Tears are absent.

Note: During the test, the investigator felt a sudden headache.

Test 4: Checking on vinyl layers of the overall head.

Result: Nothing which could be considered nerves or muscles is found.

Test 5: Checking on the body.

Result: Nothing which could be considered as nerves or muscles is found.

The head was put on its original place. The limbs and torso were stitched. S2 demonstrates characteristical signs of pain, but does not show any kind of resistance or hostility towards the investigator.

Side note: I've never had such a horrible migraine before. Strange.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

How does it even move (scratched) S2 lacks any kind of bones, muscles, nerves and anything which could make it move, stand, articulate and sense. It is unknown how S2 is able to have such a wide range of facial expressions, because its vinyl is as stiff as it should be. The source of the liquid remains undiscovered.

Note: S2 demonstrates drastically different attitude towards the tests, even if they include physical impact proven to be "painful" before. It also hardly speaks at all, just begs and whimpers from time to time. Additional checks on the behavior are required. S1 can not tell anything useful about the changes.

Side notes: So, technically, it isn't able to feel anything, despite its reactions. Will be useful for future legalisation means. Could S2 previous reactions be considered as attempts to manipulate me?

Have to delay changing batteries on S1 further: it became much more verbally aggressive, better not to have it physically overactive.

Woody could see that the world around became brighter, through his eyelids, but could not make himself open eyes. The dream, which changed the nightmarish flow of cold metal bars, needles, blood, pain, *hands* and everything worse tangled in an insane whirlwind, was so nice. Warmth, scents of dry ground and grass, the precious and so familiar plastic under his head and body, an occasional bird singing...

"Woody."

And the dear deep voice, which sounded so existent it almost hurt.

"It's way past morning, cowboy."

Woody felt his neck being stroked by a plastic hand. The sensation was way too strong to be a dream. He dared to open his eyes and gasped, finding out, that the dream was a reality.

Of course. They had made it to the more or less safe place at night. Woody remembered falling asleep on Buzz's shoulder, but now he was curled on the ranger's laps.

"How... Eh..." Woody rubbed his eyes, but a sudden thought made him jump on spot and stare at Buzz, who looked no less sleepy than him. "How long it's 'past morning'?!"

"Don't know." Buzz yawned. "I just woke up myself."

Woody cursed at the passing-by ladybug. No wonder, they had overslept: both had been at the edge of fatigue for too long. In the bush they knew by every branch it was so tempting to relax at last, that they were simply unable to resist it. But they had lost the opportunity to make sure that humans had left the house.

Warily, Woody peeked outside. The green yard and wooden stairs made him choke, as memories of happy, careless life returned like a high wave. The yard was empty, but the doll could imagine Bonnie playing with her toys in front of the house like it was really happening. He felt a movement by his shoulder, as Buzz shifted to him to have a look too.

"Stars, nothing changed." said the ranger in a trembling voice.

Woody felt his eyes burning. The coppery smell around him, the perpetual lack of air, rude stitches and long dark stripes of dirt inside cuts on Buzz's plastic told him otherwise.

"Should we risk it?" he asked unsurely.

Buzz thinned his lips and glanced away.

"Don't know, cowboy. Maybe, we should look around first." By his whole pose, Woody could see, that the ranger was no less anxious, than him.

"Not by the front door, too." he said. "Maybe, there's a way to the basement."

"Yeah... That'll work." said Buzz with a visible relief. Everything was better than the front door.

The toys creeped around, hiding in thick plants. The base of the house appeared to be a solid brick wall, with no windows or even holes. However, there was no car parked on its usual place, so at least the father was away. Woody looked at the windows above: they were way too high for them to get inside safely.

"No use." he panted, as they stopped in the same bush. "Only the front door."

"Seems to be." Buzz sighed in disappointment. "Then, we should wait for the night again. Or call for...?"

"Don't be silly. If Bonnie's at home, they'll never hear us."

"True enough."

Buzz leaned to the trunk, enormously relieved by the opportunity to *not* enter the house right now. Woody got to his side, as always: being so close to Buzz did not lose its preciousness at the slightest, even if getting *closer* was impossible for both right now.

He knew, that they were unbelievably lucky to share even the smallest moments.

---LOG 20---

PURPOSE: Farther research on the liquid exudation.

TEST SUBJECT: S1

By far, S1 did not show the ability to emit the liquid same to S2.

Test 1: Physical impact

Result: S1 does not emit any liquid.

Note: S2 signs of distress changed to much more subtle than before.

Test 2: Psychological impact.

Result: S1 does not emit any liquid.

Test 3: Physical+psychological impact.

Result: S1 does not emit any liquid despite demonstrating signs of extreme distress.

Note: Probably, it anticipated it, which lowered the reaction.

Test 4: Physical+psychological impact on S2.

Result: S1 does not emit any liquid.

Test 5: Physical+psychological impact on S2 + the order for S1 to join to not get S2 completely destroyed.

Result: S1 shuts down mentally and physically, but does not emit any liquid.

Note: despite S2 audible agreement and its lack of restrictive means, S1 did not do any of the investigator's requests before its shut-down. The promised consequences are cancelled because of S1 unresponsiveness and S2 being needed "alive" for evidence.

Result of the additional test on S2 loyalty: S2 does everything it is asked for (unless it includes S1) and does not show any kind of resistance. The restrictive measures are optional from now on.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

S1 is unable to emit any kind of liquid. Given S1 nature (it operates on a batteries), it adds to the hypothesis of the liquid being connected to some sort of energy - most probably, the one which makes S2 animated without any separate source.

Side note: Pity, S2 stopped to produce it, too, and the whole amount I have got is used. I'll have to collect as many examples as I can for the lab research and evidence when it restores it. But it seems to be connected with S2 obedience, so, I guess, I'll need to find a balance. Have to do some extra checks, though.

Camera note: S1 becomes animated by the next morning and shows signs of strong exhaustion. Possibly, the emotional shock affects the batteries capacity even more than action.

Next morning, Woody woke up early enough to hear a sound of a starting engine and humans' voices, which made him shiver. They sounded so close, yet so far away, both familiar and alien. Buzz opened his eyes, as he heard them, too. It seemed that the family was going somewhere. They both did not really care about exactly *where*: in any case, it was their chance.

"Ready?" whispered Woody to Buzz, as all the the people got into the car and drove away far enough to not return too soon.

"No."

"Me neither. Let's go."

Buzz chuckled - it was just like in old times - and went after the cowboy through the shrubs to the front stairs. They stopped for a moment before going to stairs, waited for a passing-by human to disappear, and climbed the stairs as quickly, as it was possible. Woody lost his breath by the last step, so Buzz helped him to get up and hide behind the brick column. Then, the last look on the street - it was clear - and the last dash to the flap door. They never used it before, but, thankfully, it was wide enough for the ranger's helmet.

Just as both ended up inside, they jerked to the shoe rack to have a roof over their heads. Not that it was necessary - there was no sign of life around - but having a place to hide in felt much better.

Woody looked at the known-by-heart living room as if he saw it for the first time. It was so... Cluttered. In a wonderful, lively way. Warm sunshine fell on the wooden floor, the bookshelves with cute trinkets, the soft rug, the decorative pillows on the sofa, a TV remote forgotten under it and the cat's bowls filled with food and water. Luckily, the cat was probably napping on the parent's bed, like always. Everything was so different from the dark, almost sterile house of *the human*.

Bonnie's room was the farthest one. Woody felt enormously grateful to Buzz for a slight tug on his hand, because it was like if his own shoes had been glued to the floor. The more they hesitated, the less time was left.

They crossed the living room, then passed by the door of the bathroom. It was nothing in comparison to twenty quarters, but moving had never been so tough. Woody cletched to Buzz's hand, feeling his cotton swirling in sickening terror. They only had to say hello and ask for some fresh sintepone, tools and batteries, after all, nothing much...

"...I just want to be alone for five minutes, ain't it clear enough?!"

The sudden voice, painfully, dearly familiar, cut the air and made both toys stop on the spot. Less than in a second, the door they reached for opened for a bit, and a tall, red-headed figure squeezed from it. She huffed in irritation, rubbed her nose and looked forward.

The narrowed eyes became like two green dishes.

"G-guys?"

Woody felt his knees going jelly.

Chapter 11 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/139594540)

They were unable to believe their eyes, although they knew, that the time of meeting would come eventually. Jessie - the same good old Jessie, with her red braid and hat, the white and yellow shirt and the cow-hide chaps - looked at them, as if she was seeing ghosts. All the words, which they got ready, were forgotten.

"Guys?" Jessie repeated shakily with a strange expression on her face. "Are... Are you really you?"

Woody gulped weakly. It was a question, but he just could not reply, as if a clot of cotton stuck in his throat. Come on, say something already... He glanced at Buzz, but the ranger was obviously having the same trouble.

"Er... Yes?" Woody squeezed out.

"Yeeeeeeep!!!"

With a shriek, Jessie jumped at both with all her limbs, entangling them in a manner which was only possible for rag dolls.

"It's you!!! It's you!!! It's really, really you!!!"

The cowgirl's screech became hardly comprehensible, as she began to outright bawl, hiding her face in both bandana and the helmet.

Woody put a shaking hand on his sister's shirt, chocked by all the emotions filling him at once. His first instincts were simultaneously to hug her back as strongly as he could and wriggle out from the unexpected contact as quickly as it was possible. It was unfair. He made himself to embrace her tighter, feeling Buzz doing the same thing, but the tremble from his head to toes was way too obvious.

Suddenly, the cowgirl got from them, as if being hit by something. She eyed her friends with a smile slipping from her face, changing by horror, and stepped back slightly.

"W-what..." she stuttered. "What happened with you both?"

"That's a long story." Thankfully, Buzz found his voice at last.

"I see." said Jessie and quickly glanced at the door.

Of course. She obviously saw *everything* - the stitches, the cuts, the dirt outside and inside - and got every right to be repulsed.

They'll throw us out.

"We just need some supplies!" Woody intervened hastily, not aware of his high-pitching voice. "I know, we look like trash, but we'll go away, I promise, as soon as..."

Jessie looked at him with a piercing glare.

"Go away?"

"I'm sorry!!!" Woody's voice box was going to blow up. *No way they would want us here.*

"Woody, easy." Buzz's calm words just caused an another strike of panic, as Woody felt the metallic, always so unexpectedly burning floor under his knees.

...havetocalmdownihavetobecalmicantnodontdothisilldoanythingdontdothisNO!!!..

He cletched to plastic arms, to not fall down, feeling the fiberglass of fear and shame in his head and cotton. It was pathetic, egocentrical - *like always* - but he could not stop it, he simply had no power left for it. The only thing he could control was not to tear up right away, which would scare Jessie even more.

Buzz could see his friend being on the last limits for a while, so it was not a surprise, when Woody fell into a quietly shuddering pile after so familiar yelp. That distracted him from his own stupor: if Woody did not break, then, the ranger would certainly do, but the urge to protect the rag doll overpowered his weakness. In a moment, Buzz took the vinyl hands and began to murmur soothing words, that everything was fine, they were home, they were together...

Jessie put her hand to her mouth. Something... *Everything* about her suddenly appeared friend and set brother was not right.

"I'll just tell folks to not panic too much, okay?" she asked in a much quieter voice, to not scare both even more. "I'll get back to you, promise!"

As Buzz nodded, she swiftly got behind the door.

"They'll kick us out. I know it." said Woody hoarsely.

"They haven't yet" said Buzz.

"Back then... They just *thought*, that I'm a murderer, and they left..."

Buzz sighed. The same old story, but its repetition looked frighteningly possible now. Now, it would be even fair.

By the time Jessie returned, Woody became capable of standing up and even keeping his face. Whatever was going to happen, they still had to do what they came for.

"I asked them to not make too much of a fuss." said the cowgirl. "Our folks are excited, for you know! Bonnie took Dolly with her, but it won't be the problem, I believe, when she returns."

"And when does she return?" asked Buzz.

"They went to the park, so by the midday, maybe. Bonnie has to sleep." Jessie looked at the silent cowboy, who looked at the floor under him. "Don't you even dare to think I'll let you go away again!"

"But what about the others?"

"To junk with them, if they would. Come on, let's go already!" Jessie smiled sincerely, as the cowboy looked at her at last with such a hope, as if he saw an angel.

"See?" Buzz whispered. "I've told you."

"Yeah..." Woody nodded, with his mind hazy from everything happening and a forgotten feeling flooding him.

He hesitated to believe it, but the world would be too cruel, if it all was just a dream.

The room was full of its usual noise, but, when the seemingly lost toys entered it, it went completely silent.

That was even worse, than in Ruby's nursery. Woody felt a hardly resistable urge to hide somewhere, anywhere, from eyes of looking at his stitches and spots. It was so much easier in front of strangers, but there were his *friends*. Buzz tightened his grip, but obviously not in an attempt to keep the cowboy in place - he was dreaded even more, than him. It was the first time since forever Buzz saw any other alive toy. The ranger raised a shuddering hand, so Woody took his example.

"Hi." he said in an almost whisper.

And regretted it instantly.

"What in the devil's...?!" Mr. Potato Head's exclaim was stopped by his wife's smack with a purse. "From what hell did you get from?!"

"Is it a burn?!" shrieked Rex, which made Buzz flinch. "Tell me it isn't a burn!"

"Eesh, what's that smell? It's like when Bonnie cut her finger!"

"Shut up, Buttercup! Boy, what's happened to you?!"

"What monster of a kid did this?!"

"Was it Sid?"

"Jessie, you didn't tell it was so bad!"

"Guys, you've promised!" screamed Jessie on the top of her voice box, but the havok had already broken loose.

The cowgirl quickly pushed both Woody and Buzz, who stood like two hares in the car lights, towards the closet, shooed away the toys inside and closed the door. Then, she sighed deeply, took off her hat and run her fingers through her hair in irritation.

"I'm sorry, you know, how it's here." she grumbled.

"Yeah... Predictable." Woody squeezed out a smile.

"Positive." said Buzz dully, looking into void. "Wouldn't take it other way."

The voices outside were still there, but pleasantly muted by the closet walls and clothes in it. It was also dark enough to feel safe. And *no more questions* - not all at once, leastwise.

"So... Do you need anything?" asked Jessie anxiously. "Something urgent?"

"Cotton or sintepon." said Woody. "And, er... Needles?" He shivered. "Yes. A needle, with a thread."

"And something sharp, too." Buzz added with a painful frown.

Jessie would not be a rag doll, if she did not understand everything by the words. She gasped slightly.

"Is it with padding? I can help, if you want!"

The suggestion made Woody feel fuzzy - he could see the sincere worry in his sister's eyes, and the help of a fellow doll would be the best - until he remembered, what was inside him. Jessie - nobody - had to see it.

"It's not good at all. Not for you, truly." he mumbled.

"So what? You're my sorta brother, no need to be shy!.." Jessie just began to object, but by the looks of both her friends, she realised, that Woody actually meant it. "...Alright. Fine." She sighed. "I'll go get everything."

Just as the cowgirl went outside, the voices got louder. Woody huddled to Buzz, relieved, that there, in the closet, behind all the dusty stuff, they were alone. The familiar scents surrounded them, there was no need to worry about animals,

and it was so cozy...

"Tell me I'm not dreaming." said Buzz suddenly. "I've got dreams like this in... It's not the case, right?"

"Right... I guess?" said Woody uncertainly. "If it was, I bet, you'd be already awake after our pals' greeting."

Buzz scratched his head with a such a Buzz-like half-dumb grin, that Woody could not hold a snicker.

Jessie returned in much less time, than they presumed. She put the spool on the floor and took a pile of sintepon larger than her from someone behind the door, while somebody else pushed the brown bottle with some sort of liquid into the closet along with a small napkin package.

"That's a peroxide-thing, Mr. Pricklepants told me it's good for cleaning." The cowgirl explained, as Woody jerked back at the first glance on the bottle. "Buttercup got it from the first-aid kit, I didn't even guess they keep it there!"

"It's not just dirt, you know?" said Woody.

Jessie rolled her eyes.

"We *all* know, Bonnie once cut her finger during the play. That's why they got me it in the first place." Seeing her brother's embarrassment, Jessie quickly added: "Nevermind, tell later!"

At the words, Buzz immediately tensed up.

"Roger, cleaning, then re-stuffing. Freeze."

"Hey, I promise, that's not even itchy!" said Jessie. "Just like water... Fine, fine." she raised her hands at Buzz's glare. "Napkins are for you, by the way, Slinky said, they don't damage paint."

"Wait a minute." Woody just realized something, and he had to make sure. "Did you get the *whole room* into this?!"

"I didn't have a choice, they insisted on it!" Jessie spread her arms.

"Well, I'd never..." Woody rubbed his forehead, as his world began to turn downside up slowly, like on rusty gearwheels. "You *really* want us here?"

"Of course we do, how could you even dare to doubt?! Even Mr. Potato Head and Hamm are happy that you've returned!" Jessie began to blink rapidly. "Get in the toy mode already, you mule."

With the words, she got up and went behind the nearest box, a bit too fast, but not because of fear or revulsion . Woody tried to get up too, but the plastic palm on his chest stopped him.

"Relax." said Buzz smoothly. "We are safe."

With a sigh, Woody went into the toy mode trustingly. If Buzz said it, then, it had to be true.

---LOG 21---

PURPOSE: Studying the decreased energy effect on cognitive functions.

TEST SUBJECT: S1

Test 1: Usual talk.

Result: S1 demonstrates slower speech pattern than normally and thinks about its answers less.

Note: S1 thinks longer before answering the question about the possibility of other toys being alive. The answer is negative.

Test 2: Simple mathematical equation.

Result: S1 demonstrates signs of increasing distress, but solves the equation in 30s.

Note: S1 mentions that it helped its owner with maths when he was not home. Since its owner seems to be in college, the help had to be useful.

Test 3: Hard equation.

Result: S1 solves the equation in 5 minutes 46 seconds.

Note: That is impressive, given S1 state.

Side note: I had to do the tests earlier, before it lost most of its charge. If it is going to be loyal, I'll repeat it after batteries changing.

Test 4: Reading.

Result: S1 reads the article aloud slowly, but without mistakes.

Test 5: Logical riddle.

Result: S1 demonstrates signs of tiredness, but gives the right answer.

TEST SUBJECT: S2

Test 1: Usual talk.

Result: S2 talks slower and more monotonously than normally.

Test 2: Simple equation.

Result: S2 solves the equation in 1 minute 2 seconds.

Note: S2 seems to not actually care about the result.

Test 3: Hard equation.

Result: S2 immediately gives the right answer. When asked, how did it know it, S2 said that it told the random number.

Note: The right answer is a decimal number. Either S2 is extremely lucky or it is smarter than it looks.

Test 4: Reading.

Result: S2 reads the article slowly, stumbles on harder words and keeps apologizing for it. By the end of the article it cannot read even elementary words, probably, due to increasing nervousness.

Test 5: Logical riddle.

Result: S2 stucks on the riddle and quickly gets too distressed to solve it in either way.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT:

S1 maintains high cognitive abilities even at lower charge. S2 cognitive abilities are obviously damaged by constant stress, which is closer to human-like brain work.

Results of 2 additional behavior checks: S2 does not show any kind of resistance towards the investigator despite being free of restrictions. The control test is planned for tomorrow.

Side note: it seems to become bonded (?) to me, which is satisfying in a strange sense. Probably, the "playtime" effect works for adults, too. Won't try it on S1, though - I actually begin to feel some respect towards it.

Chapter 12 **(http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/139864507)**

The door opens with a creak. Buzz hears the soft clack of vinyl heels on the metal and realizes, that Woody is really up to the plan. The ranger does not raise his head from his elbows - he cannot watch it, even if he realizes that it is just an act.

Woody leans to the bars and looks at the tall shadow over the cages, lit by the white lamp. He makes his face look pleadingly, although the only desire he has is to tear apart the human's face. Not now, he has to play it up until the right time. And he has to do everything to make the human take him out first.

"What's the matter, subject two?" The human notices the doll looking at him.

"I want to play." The voice box shrinks in disgust of himself.

"Really? Didn't expect this."

Woody cannot see the human's face, but he knows by the wave of debilitatingly terrifying scent, that the bait was taken. He does not try to stop his knees from shaking: he knows well by now, that his visible fear only stirs the human, and that is the exact thing he needs.

The cage lock opens. Woody catches all the movements to repeat them later, enormously relieved, that the lock is not under electrical charge. He hopes, that the one on Buzz's cage is not charged too. The human stopped significantly on the restrictions recently.

He makes himself lay his hands and rub his cheek on the large hand, which is not in a thick glove. The only wish he has is to sink his teeth into bare flesh. He remembers well, that it is even more vulnerable, than cloth, that his teeth are sharp enough to easily rip it, and that his bite is painful for the human... Not now.

At the tickle on his pullstring ring Woody deliberately purrs, and the scent coming from the human becomes stronger. The shame and dread multiply, and Woody closes his eyes tightly. It is wrong in the most twisted way possible. The human will pay for this, he just needs to hold himself a bit longer, but the toy already feels as if there is fiberglass behind his eyes. He had learned to hold tears to save energy, but he did it for too long.

Woody's fight with himself comes in hand: the human, even in his paranoia about the toy, does not suspect anything. He believes, that the rag doll's strange behavior is the result of its damaged sanity. It is not very far from truth, as Woody himself considers, but not in the way the human thinks.

He feels dry cold hands grabbing him, sees the blinding white lamp and the table with papers and small jars. The picture is burned in his mind forever. If he fails, it is certainly going be the last place he will ever see. The human puts him on the hard surface, places a paper cutter nearby, and urges Woody to lay down on his back. That is the last thing Woody wants, but he obeys, and endures caresses on his neck, chest and lower. The human always does it while choosing a place to cut first. The feeling of fiberglass fills his head from eyes to throat.

The human will pay for all of this. From the pain he caused them to the shattered innocence of their whole life purpose.

The hand stops on one of the stitches and rubs it gently. The human takes the knife and bents over the laying doll like a cat over a little rat.

Now.

Buzz had to do everything right, even if he knew, that he was short on time. The haunting visions of screaming or, even worse, quietly sobbing doll, while he could not do anything to help, even if he wanted to tear *the human* apart then, did not let go of his mind.

First, the cleaning. Jessie was right: the "peroxide" was no different from water, but the stains disappeared without a trace under it. Buzz stroke the yellow plaid and blue jeans gently, surprised, how bright they became.

Then, the stuffing. There was no need to even cut anything, with all of the stitches. The cotton in the torso looked even more sickening, than Buzz remembered since he had awoke under the gazebo: the remained blood, rust and dirt dried, turning it into a clay-like mass. It explained well, why Woody had been choking on air every fifteen or so minutes of continuous walking. Buzz carefully removed all of it, shuddering inside from more memories. Thank manufacturer, Woody was in a still state. After that, the ranger saw the voice box, and felt an urge to repeat what his friend had done to *the human* with his own hands.

The voice box was covered in dirt and blood, and some of them clearly seeped inside. Hesitantly, Buzz touched it. After everything he witnessed, it felt too intimate, borderline obscene. He had to clean it and he knew, that Woody would certainly not remember it: he had said back in the cage, that removing of body padding made him black out. Yet, Buzz could not help feeling himself being no better than *the human* was.

He used one of napkins to clear it at least on outside, until the plastic became fully white. Then, the string. When it coiled back, clean and smooth again, Buzz gave out a devastated sigh: the only sound he heard was a whispery scratch. He remembered well, that Bonnie especially liked both of them "talking". Would she want them now, when one toy emitted something dreadful and the another one became outright "mute"?

At least, the padding was good now, and the solution suggested by his friends made the bloody stains disappear without a trace. Buzz exerted himself to stitch as accurately, as he could, although the brown thread was certainly not a good choice.

Just as he finished, Woody blinked, inhaled deeply and got up on his elbows with a confused expression.

"Wow." he sighed and shook his head. "That's... Something."

"Better?"

"*Much* better." Woody smiled stupidly, jumped on his legs and nearly fell on the ranger. "Wait a second, too much air..."

Buzz felt like a rock moved from his chest, seeing his friend who stumbled with a drunken, but amazed expression on his face. Meanwhile, Woody sobered up a little and took the remaining tissues.

"Okay, sit down, it's my turn."

"Hey, I can do it..." the ranger protested, but the smooth grip on his joints made him to re-think it instantly.

"You may freeze, you know?" asked Woody carefully.

Buzz tried the napkin on one of the scratch, felt pleasant cool and shook his head.

"No, it's good."

The cowboy smiled shyly and began to rub on all the edges to make them shine again.

It was relieving to see the ranger gradually relaxing under his hands and a wet tissue, which had a sharp scent and made his head lighter. Woody could see, how his own suffering made Buzz himself suffer no less. It was like a vicious cycle: Woody could not do anything, because him hiding pain seemed to tense up the ranger further, and this, in its turn, made the doll feel even more awful. It used to be like this for years, since Sid's house. *The human* just made that weird kind of a bond reach the truly unhealthy level.

But now, there was no human, they were home, and Woody was so glad to return the favor at last. What toy could ever think, that being in the safety, fully breathing and having the another one beloved toy nearby was better, than being played with a kid? Especially when the toy in question was more content, than he was in weeks - or even in years.

Woody barely paid attention to soft clacks of heels and a cloth rustling near him. Jessie just watched silently, in awe with the quiet flow of emotions between the two toys in front of her. For the doll, who, despite all the losses, still kept her toyness, it was borderline terrifying. Not to mention something sinister, which was coming from her brother despite his blissful expression.

"How are you?" Jessie determined to ask at last.

Woody jolted at the unexpected words, with a face immediately changed to frightened one.

"Ah!.. Oh, sorry. It's you. I'm sorry." He stuttered as he realized, who was asking them. "Better. A lot better. Thank you, thank you so much!" He gasped out, bowing slightly, which only worried Jessie more.

"Hey, that's nothing..." she began soothingly, but Buzz intervened:

"That's *everything*. You don't know how much you've helped us."

Jessie bit her lower lip with a pitiful frown. The mix of sincere gratefulness, high alert and helpless fear her friends looked at her with unsettled her to no end, especially after an idyllic picture two minutes earlier. They clinged to each other, but did not let the cowgirl get closer, as if putting a thin transparent wall between them and her: one wrong word, and they would shut away forever. It hurt, but for some reason Jessie could see, that it was not their fault.

Whatever had happened, it had to be worse, than Jessie could imagine.

"For how long was I out?" Suddenly, Woody tensed up and glanced at the closet door.

"Fifteen minutes at most." said Jessie. "Don't worry, Bonnie won't come back so soon!"

Her words certainly did not convince the cowboy, because he began to rub Buzz's back quicker. Buzz himself went down from his havens and took the last tissue to clean up his chest plate and legs.

"What happened to you both, for Colt's sake?"

It was impossible for Jessie to hold back at that point. Were they afraid of Bonnie coming home?! That was just ridiculous, if not insane.

"*The human*." Woody hissed, not stopping on the job.

"What?!"

"He found us alive. That's the result." said Buzz plainly.

"Wait a minute. Was it that guy you told me you've scared away before I came in Andy's room?" Jessie could not believe her ears.

"Sid? No-o-o." Woody gave out a crackled laugh. "It was his doctor. *A good man*, as toys of his daughter believe."

He grinned with all his teeth, but his eyes went hollow, and Jessie felt cold shivers going down her voice box.

"Wanted us to be his playthings, reveal us to the world, use as tools for his patients... He didn't make it, for now, but he's still alive, I couldn't..."

Buzz swiftly got away from the tightened grip on his backplate and took the cowboy's hand. Woody sighed deeply, briefly returning into himself, but then crouched down to his laps as the guilt hit him. Buzz himself lowered his head, not able to look at the normal toy in front of him, especially so since the toy was Jessie.

For the first time, the whole trio could not choose the right words to say to each other. Jessie felt with her stuffing, that both wanted to share some secret that was way too dark to tell out loud, so they hesitated. They were reaching for her, but too scared to be kicked away after. The whole premise of her closest friends being afraid of *her* made Jessie's eyes burn, just like they did, when she finally realized that Emily would never return for her.

Just like on the one day, when she suddenly awoke with a weird, oily moist on her face and a voice box ready to blow up, and saw, that Bullseye had that strange wetness too.

"...I missed you so much." Finally, Jessie spoke out, unable to endure her own memories. "I thought, you'll never come back. Folks kept talking, that, maybe, you've got an another owner, some other kid, and you're happy in the new house, but I just knew, that it's so much not like that. They didn't believe me. Only me and Bullseye knew..."

Woody raised his head. He realized, what his sister was talking about: that strange connection which made the whole Round-Up set understand each other without extra words. But he never thought it could work at the distance. His own strugglings and thoughts he had been falling asleep with every night in the cage until his breaking hurt his sister and the horse. It made him even more sick.

"I'm sorry..."

"If you ever say it again, I'll rip your string out!" Jessie cried out tearfully. "Now, you've come back, and keep hinting and shutting me away, would you just tell, what exactly had happened?! And don't mention Bonnie, we have enough time for that!"

"You won't like it." said Buzz quickly to get the ugly mess which was starting under control.

"Believe me, I *know*." The cowgirl sighed, ashamed of her own snap, but still determined. "I won't tell anybody anything you don't want them to hear, but I can't see you both being like this and only guess about the reasons. Not with *this* right here." She pointed at the dirty pile of cotton covered by one of the napkins.

Woody and Buzz shared a brief look. Surprisingly, Jessie's burst, even if fierce, made them feel more at place, than anything. It was a sign of things being *normal*.

Jessie had to know the truth. If she did not want them there after, then, they would have no right to stay, and even if it was a dreadful thought, at least, it would be well-deserved.

Eventually, they told everything. If one could not make up the words, the other one helped, while the cowgirl sat silently and listened. Buzz stucked on the tale of the doll, and Woody had to hold his hand for him to not do anything harmful. Surprisingly, Jessie took the part with destroyed toys better, than they expected.

"I bet, they knew, why you did this." she said solemnly to the ranger. "If they even woke up after what their human had done."

"I don't know what to wish, if they came alive or not." Buzz sighed bitterly. "I would have never done it, but still..."

"That was for our good. If you'd deny, he would go for other toys, who'd have it even worse." said Jessie. "It's awful, sure, but I don't want to imagine what he'd do to Bullseye, Slinky or even Mr. Potato Head, if you'd break your lie!" The cowgirl shivered.

"So, do you still want me there?" Buzz asked with such an uncertainty, that Woody tightened his grip on the plastic arm.

"Of course I do!" Jessie exclaimed, reached for Buzz's other hand. "Until you try to go on a stuffy rampage, but I'm pretty sure you won't." She smiled crookedly. "Will you?"

Without a word, Buzz stood up and squeezed the rag doll in a mighty bear hug. Jessie struggled for a bit in astonishment, but then just hang loosely and gave Woody, who jumped up to help, a thumb-up. The glass wall cracked, at last.

Still, there was more to tell, and it only got more and more ominous. For Woody, it was hard enough to describe, even if briefly, the tortures, but it became downright impossible to name everything *the human* did later in his "playtimes". He could only give out short phrases, vague hints - and clearly, it scared Jessie much more. Buzz's silence enforcened it: the ranger with his artificial human memories understood some things better, than Woody, but he did not want to speak about them even under a threat of being thrown into a firepit.

However, Buzz took his turn to tell about the way they had escaped. His own memories about it were foggy, because of his almost dead batteries then, but the picture of *the human* screaming and trying to get rid of a toy on his face was one of the brightest ones he had so far. Woody just sat through the story with a hollow stare. Jessie kept glancing between him and at the cotton pile with a mouth agape.

"...You know what?" she said, as Buzz took his breath. "I'd *love* to repeat it on his other eye!"

"Well, he's alive, you have your chance." said Woody biliously. "But you'd better not even try."

Jessie huffed, run her hand over her forehead and rubbed her face.

"So, that's what was that. I know, what liquid you're talking about, I've had it on the night he'd... That bastard." She hissed in a helpless rage.

Woody cletched his fists. So, his breaking made his sister cry, too. *The human* reached even for her, even if unknowingly. That was such a... human thing. To destroy everything, with or without their knowledge.

"I don't know if I'll manage to be played with again." At last, he spoke out the worst thing which was hovering over his mind. "Even by a kid."

Jessie blinked. Buzz looked aside, silently agreeing with the cowboy.

That was the actual reason for their closedness.

"But Bonnie's not like that! She always plays gently, and she treats us a living beings, but not in his way, remember?"

Woody pursed his lips. The words were right, true, but it was as if they were coming from some other world. The better world, where nobody even thought about the true nature of their gods. This world used to be his, and it was so close, but the invisible wall did not allow him to enter it again.

Jessie took her brother's hand desperately, and, hesitantly, he leaned into her hug. The glass cracked, true, yet it still did not fall down.

Suddenly, all three jerked, and Woody shifted closer to Buzz: somebody knocked on the closet door.

"Hey, are you there?" the muffled, slightly hoarse voice sounded, which Woody recognized on instance. Slinky. "Bonnie'll come soon!"

"One minute!" said Jessie loudly.

"The bottle. Damn!" Woody groaned. It was way too large and heavy to get it in place quickly.

"Mom won't even notice, don't worry."

"But what if she will?!"

Jessie turned to them both.

"Then, she'll make up some excuse for herself. They don't know we're alive, be sure of it!" she said firmly. "Just hide somewhere in there for now."

"We'll help you to return it." Buzz promised.

"You'd better do, it's heavy as a prize bull." Jessie smirked. "I'll get back as soon as I can, and don't even think about hitting the road!"

The cowgirl went outside and closed the door, followed by more voices. The toys were certainly worried about their friends. Both the cowboy and the space ranger knew, that they had to come out sooner or later - but now, after telling everything, they felt that they could actually make it.

Maybe, the better world was inaccessible for them right now, but they could certainly warm up by its entrance.

Chapter 13 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/140155552)

"...Good evening, Mrs. Dolly! How are you doing? Well, hello, Sheriff Jessie! I just had a wonderful walk in the park! Do you fancy some tea? You look worried, dear! What do you say? You've met someone in the big scary mine? Oh, I see! They're scared! What, Mrs. Dolly? Of course, we can invite them later!.."

"...phew." Buzz exhaled. "Guess, she won't look here tonight."

"I hope so." Woody whispered unsurely.

They both hid in the deepest and darkest corner of the closet and listened to the happy chirrup outside. Bonnie had a "tea party", as she used to do a month earlier - like in the garden, nothing had changed in the room. It could be as if they had never been lost, if not for the crippling dread of being found and thrown out at best hanging over their minds.

The voice of the kid awoke something forgotten in the rag doll's soul. It smoldered weakly, like a trampled charcoal, but yearned to join the play. Woody was surprised, that it was still there in the first place - maybe, changing of padding helped not only his breath? However, there was an another part, which flamed and screamed about betrayal.

It was not a right kind of thought. Bonnie would have never guessed what would happen, it was their fault of being too careless. But there were itching stitches, cuts and damages, too. Woody had known already about his silent voice box: Buzz had told him. Not that it was a sensation for him, but he knew for sure, that it had been the main reason for Bonnie to want him in the first place. While she did not leave them then, she could do that now.

From the human's point of view, it was not even a traitorous act. Toys were things, even if they lived.

Woody saw that Buzz had just as troubled thoughts as his own by the ranger's narrowed eyes and pursed lips. He laid to the ranger to ease his mind, snuggling under a heavy arm on his side.

"Bonnie, dear, it's time to go to bed."

Both jolted up at the lower voice.

"Will you read me?"

"Sure, but only after you put your toys in the closet, like we agreed.. What's wrong?"

The heavier steps went into the room.

"What's wrong, Bonnie?" Mom repeated softly.

"I don't like the closet." said Bonnie. "It's scary."

"Come on. There're no monsters inside, remember? We'll put on a magic moon lamp to be sure..."

Bonnie did not answer. Mom sighed, and suddenly Woody was hit by a feeling, that they were being watched. The closet got the adult human's attention.

"...Alright. To be honest, it's really creepy." said Mom at last in an uneven voice. "Then, let's just put them everywhere to watch over!" she said with half-sincere enthusiasm.

Bonnie agreed readily, and the "monsters" in the closet exhaled simultaneously. Woody touched his forehead briefly: he was not sure if she even got his thoughts, like the woman before. He simply did not have time to react.

"Now, she'll certainly search the closet later." muttered Buzz.

"I didn't even think anything!"

"I know, me too, but she took a notice." Buzz sighed tiredly and lay his head on his laps. "Blast them all..."

Woody interlocked his fingers with the ranger's ones, hoping, it would give him some comfort. There was a plan B, of course, but after a day in safety and warmth they had no wish to actually go for it. That meant, they were going to meet the humans of the family sooner or later, and had to be good enough to not be thrown in a trash bin right away.

The light outside dimmed. Mom read aloud to Bonnie the story about the Velveteen Rabbit, one of the girl's favorite ones. Woody himself always found it sad - it triggered certain memories he wished he had never got - and slightly eerie: the human who wrote it knew way too much about the toys' life. Now, the puppet was even less sure, if the writer was actually a good person. What if they knew too, that toys were alive?

At last, Mom wished Bonnie good night and turned off the lights, leaving only the small "magic moon lamp", which barely gave any light whatsoever. The room went pleasantly dark and quiet, even more so inside the closet. The toys there heard some faint whispers, muffled and indistinct, but that was all. Even in their curiosity, the others did not dare to move around to not disturb their owner's sleep.

Woody dozed off as it became clear, that everything was calm and peaceful. Buzz held on for a bit longer to make sure, that no danger was around, but then laid down too, resting his head on a soft torso and relishing in long limbs entangling him.

The first thing Woody knew was that he was under something heavy.

To his own great surprise, it did not make him jerk on the spot. The wooden and dusty scents around, along with soft light coming from the closet planks, promised him right away, that he was safe. Not to mention, that the heaviness on him

was clearly plastic and snored loudly.

"Ahem?"

Now, Woody jolted up. The snoring above stopped.

"Hey, I'm sorry! Didn't want to scare you!"

Woody blinked, trying to get rid of the claws of panic on his voice box. Large eyes, droopy ears, black nose. Sure, that was Slinky. His good pal Slinky. Fine.

"Oh, that's nothing!" Woody whispered quickly. "It's... Ah... You didn't, er..."

He stucked on words, while his mind could not get around the one thing. Was Slinky apologizing to *him*? The thought itself was so surreal that Woody just froze with a hanging jaw.

"What the..." Buzz grumbled above.

Suddenly, he made a strange sound and shifted down from Woody into a defensive position. By his hazy eyes, it was clear that he was not fully awake yet. The dog toy backed away, squeezing his tail between the hind legs.

"That's all good, it's Slinky!" Woody got up and shook the ranger's shoulder slightly. "We're home, Buzz."

"Oh, um..." Buzz frowned, shook his head and focused at the toy at last. After it, he sighed in embarrassment. "Sorry. Didn't mean it."

"Man, Jessie ain't dramatized." Slinky said uneasily, eyeing both from heads to boots. "Humans are away, I just thought, maybe, we could give a greeting..."

Woody, still at loss for proper words, glanced at the doors and, to his further terror, saw a dozen of toys looking inside. There was no Jessie among them: it seemed, that, wherever she went, Bonnie took the cowgirl doll with her. There were things the toys just could not affect.

"Er... Sounds... Good?" Woody choked out.

"Positive." Buzz tremulously saluted the others his special spreaded-fingers gesture.

"And we have a bottle to return and a junk to throw out." Woody clinged to the thought to stay more or less calm. "To not make *them* suspicious..."

"Them?" Slinky raised one ear in confusion.

The spear of horror went through both toys at once. Their family did not know anything, Jessie kept her promise to not tell them their story. But they had to know at least some of the truth, before doing something reckless again! Not to mention, that Bonnie still kept taking them outside, where *the human* could lurk...

"Humans." Woody said through gritted teeth. "Thanks, Slinky. You've come in time, we have something to tell."

Slinky shivered at the darkened faces of his returned friends. The mood around them changed, true, but not in the way Slinky considered "right".

The rush of determination did not last for long, though.

The toys got from the doors to make way for their friends. There were no questions - nothing at all, actually, just an awkward silence. Under the stare of numerous eyes, the vastness of high ceiling and wide walls, Woody grasped Buzz's hand to put down an urge to sprint back to the cozy closet. Buzz' s grip was just as desperate, but the ranger, at least, cleared his throat to lessen the tension.

"Neeeeiiigh!!!"

All of a sudden, Bullseye, whom Bonnie left in the room, dashed to the toys, pushing others from his way. He jumped on Woody, who barely stood on his feet, with a high whinny and began to lick his head like a giant overly excited puppy.

"Hey! Wait!" With Bullseye, it was impossible. "Boy, wait a minute!"

Laughing from tickling and a great relief, which he was not sure to whom exactly it belonged - himself or the rag horse - Woody almost fell on Buzz. Mercifully, Bullseye turned his attention to the ranger, whom he adored no less than cowfolk. Buzz chortled wholeheartedly, squeezing the plush toy to his plate. He did not even notice when the room became much louder.

"At last, I thought you two were gonna stay there forever!" grumbled Mr. Potato Head, reaching to Woody for a handshake, which was half-surely returned.

"Wouldn't be surprised." Hamm smirked, coming closer too.

"I'm so glad you're here!" Rex ran to Buzz excitedly, followed by Little Green Men, who were obviously delighted to see the another space toy returned. Buzz gave them the same salute with the free hand, grinning widely.

Woody got himself free from Bullseye's hind legs, feeling slightly dizzy from the chaos around. He patted Slinky when the latter bumped him reassuringly with his nose, while Mrs. Potato Head made a concerned remark about his stitches without any sign of repulse. Whatever Jessie had told them, nobody asked anything, to Woody's great relief. Either they knew something already and were content with it, or they just understood that both toys had troubles with questions. Despite being a rather eccentric bunch, Andy's toys could be inexpectedly helpful, if they wanted to.

There was something off, though, Woody could feel it with his stuffing. Something...

Of course. Most of Bonnie's toys stood aside. Only Trixie was near Rex, who kept rapturing over Buzz, and Chuckles came closer too, clearly not knowing, what to say. Plushies just glared at both returned toys from behind the plastic crowd with obvious strain.

They could feel something with their stuffing, too. Buzz noticed it, as he stepped closer to Woody without realizing it, and the cowboy did so as well.

"What's the matter with you?!" Mr. Potato Head snapped suddenly, although, not to the duo.

Buttercup shared a look with Mr. Pricklepants, who hotched a little, and with Totoro, who covered Peas-in-the-Pod with his huge pillow-like body and kept glancing between the toys and the closet. Dolly, who stood silent for the whole time, frowned.

"I'd like to know, what's the matter with *you*?" At last, she asked harshly the ranger and the sheriff.

Woody flinched. Despite the fellow doll's piercing voice, he realized, that she was scared to death. Just like the other ones, who had stuffing and were not Bullseye. And he could tell, that they all already knew, what they both had done to get free, despite not knowing the reason. That was like all the soft toys worked. Woody knew it well, as he was one of them.

"Er... We've met the human." He stuttered, realizing, that they had to explain at least something already.

"Were toynapped, to be precise." said Buzz. "He saw us alive."

The room went silent. Now, they had the full attention. Woody felt his knees going unsteady.

"Yeah, that's right." He glanced at Buzz, who nodded to him encouragingly. "He... Well... He was worse, than Sid, and he tried to make us reveal, that you're all alive, to him. We did *everything* to not let him know." By the plushies' slightly changed looks, Woody understood, that they knew, what he was talking about. "We didn't have a choice." He said bitterly. "He would do just as horrible things to you, if he knew. They *all* would do, as he wanted everyone to know about us."

"Wait a minute." Buttercup found his voice, while Dolly lowered her gaze trying to get her head around the whole lot of information she got transmitted by the whole cowboy doll's posture, words and padding, even if new. "So, your both's all..."

"Made by him, for multiple times." said Woody plainly.

"For the whole time?.."

"Minus two weeks or so."

"And the blood..."

"*His*."

"Holy poppies."

"Affirmative." said Buzz grimly.

"But what kind of a man could do such a thing?" Mr. Pricklepants gasped out. "We're toys, they like us, even if they grow up!"

He immediately regretted his words, as both toys stiffened abruptly.

"Oh yes, he *did* like us." hissed Woody, as his voice box throbbed painfully. "You'd better not know, *how*."

Buzz saw his friend losing reins again and caught them quickly, while stroking the cowboy's arm with his thumb.

"The thing we wanted to ask you is to not let the humans know we are alive, whatever it takes." He spoke out loudly. "I know, that's some kind of a rule, but it's for our own best. Forget about kids, adults, everyone of them - it's just for us all to stay safe, or they'll do to you the same he did to us."

The toys listened quietly. The only thought of thinking about *themselves*, not about kids, was outrageous at the first glance. However, Andy's bunch looked much less puzzled by it. Trixie looked hopefully at Rex, but even he gazed away, as if he heard something he only guessed about being confirmed.

"...Thank you for telling us." said Dolly at last. Her voice faltered. "I thought, you had done something awful, and that you'd go on us too... but now I see it was not on your will. I'm so sorry for you both." She took a step to the duo. "Will you stay here?"

Woody tilted his head in astonishment. That was not the question he expected from the second head toy at all.

"Can we?"

"Sure you can!" Dolly blinked, baffled. "Bonnie cried over you for two weeks! I just wondered, how you'd join the playtimes after that." She shivered a little.

The silent question hang over the whole room. Woody felt his voice box melting, as well as his knees going soft.

They were welcomed there. After all they had done and got through, with the damages, which could not be fully repaired, even with invisible wreckage, which was obvious for the half of the room, not only Jessie and Bullseye, but they *all* wanted them both to stay. It was not a lie or archness, Woody would sense it right away.

It would be too good to be true, if not the real possibility to end up at humans' mercy again. The only thought caused the voice box ache in protest. But how could they give up on their folks now? The perspective of leaving Jessie, and

Bullseye, and everyone else hurt no less, if not even more. They were like small vital pieces of some mechanism, which loss was not noticeable when the whole system was broken, but obvious after its repair.

The puppet glanced at the ranger and saw the same struggling in the blue eyes.

"Shall we try?" asked Buzz quietly.

"We could." Woody said just as barely hearable. "If you want."

Buzz nodded readily.

"We'll stay." said Woody to everyone. "Until they trash us." He muttered to himself.

What chances did they have in their condition, even if they were wanted there? Nobody heard his last words in their sincere glee, though, despite Buzz, who held his hand firmly.

The tall figure stumbles inside. The house is unchanged, and his wife and daughter are still on the vacation, which is good: he could not think about the way to explain his two days absence along with his state. Probably, the story of a patient having a psychotic episode could explain, how their dear husband and daddy got a scar and lost an eye? Actually, it is not even a lie in a sense... Extremely weird sense, though.

The fact of the destroyed "lab", which was just a basement of a rented house, haunts him. All the sensational information, all the evidence, which could blow minds of his colleagues and the entire scientific society, was lost. Damn smoke detectors and sprinklers... Thinking about them, the man briefly looks at the dusty floor - and stops on the spot.

There are small footprints on it. Narrow, pointy, with distinct heels. Fresh.

The man feels his head burning. He crouches, looks intently on the traces, gets up and follows them. They lead him to the living room, then to the kitchen, and, at last - to the nursery.

The toys around look just as they were, when he was there last time. The man scowls and goes to the container with spare batteries. He put it there, so he could change them quickly for Ruby to not get upset.

The man remembers exactly, how many of them were left - counting always fascinates him. He counts the batteries for three times, until he finally gets it: two of them are absent.

The empty eye socket sends a bolt of fierce pain to his head. The man slowly closes the lid.

"You little bitch."

It takes him a lot of self-control to not to destroy all Ruby's toys right away.

Chapter 14 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/140546167)

Bonnie was at kindergarten this day, so the toys had plenty of time for themselves.

Buzz helped to get the bottle of peroxide up to the first aid kit, which stood on the highest shelf of the room. He did not have an opportunity to practice on his leaps, but his body remembered it well enough. The ranger got up just as gracefully as he used to do before, and scratched his head in delighted confusion, as his wires became warmer from all of the cheering below. He missed that kind of admiration a lot, not to mention the addictive tickle in his joints working at their best.

Woody, meanwhile, kicked the remains of plastic napkin packages and everything else, which he wrapped in several layers of tissues and paper, out of the window into the thick foliage. He could not decide, what sickened him the most about it: the fact he had it inside, the fact, that it was outside now, or the raw emotional charge the cotton was soaked in.

The padding absorbed humans' emotions, true. The toy from the past would never give them away willingly, as they reminded him of happy days with Andy and his father, and Bonnie later. Sure, there was something from Sid, but it was brief and not even really disturbing. Woody used to live on them in darker days, but in the mere month, they all were irreparably tarnished by the adult's ones, twisting even the most bright memories into something full of sick intentions.

If there was a possibility, Woody would gladly burn the dirty pile. Not that he actually liked humans aside his owners in the first place, but he had never felt anything like this towards them before. At least, he had the fresh stuffing now, which eased the grief about the loss.

"Woody, look!"

The familiar call woke the cowboy up from his darkened mood, and he turned to its source.

"What the... Buzz!"

Buzz jumped with his wings out, making Woody's voice box drop to his heels. Then, the wings caught a breeze from the open window, and the ranger landed smoothly on the bed, straightening just in time to drop the lift force. After that, he spread his chest and gave his unbearable grin to the crowd.

Woody unfroze and hastily got down from the windowsill. Manufacturer knew, he hated and loved it at the same time. The cowboy ran close to the bed, ready to scold Buzz for being so stupidly careless, but stopped at the hand in front of his

nose. As he glanced up, he saw Buzz being stupidly careless again, as he was literally hanging on sheets with boot edges and the other hand.

"What the hell are you doing?!" Woody hissed.

"Come on, get up here." said Buzz. His blue eyes gleamed.

Woody took it, not noticing the intrigued glances around. As the ranger jumped back on the bed, the cowboy stumbled on sheets to catch a balance, and fell on the plastic chest. Buzz's cocky attitude was surely infectious, because, as they shared a look, Woody did something reckless too. Forgetting about everything for a second, he swiftly kissed the ranger's nose.

Woody could swear, that Buzz would go red as a tomato, if he had skin and blood. Buzz made a dorkish sound, looked aside briefly, and returned it on the pointy nose too.

It felt like a small electrical shock, which muffled all the sounds, blurred all the colors and made the cotton shrink - not in fear or shame, but in exultation. *Not like then. It's absolutely nothing like then.*

"Hey, are you okay there?" The voice of Slinky dragged both out of their sudden punch-like drunkeness.

"Er... Yes! It's fine!" Woody said loudly.

"Positively so." said Buzz and cleared his throat.

The last remains of tension in the room melted away after that. Woody relished at Buzz's loud voice, as the ranger got into the conversation with Rex about some sci-fi movie the dinosaur watched with Bonnie and her parents recently. He sounded so annoyingly proud and confident, like nothing had ever happened, and he surely did not forget how astrophysics worked in reality. The Sheriff himself got into a discussion with Dolly and Slinky about the overall state of the room. The fellow doll was pleased to have the second leader around, at last - for her, dealing with Andy's half of the room appeared to be a real challenge. Bullseye participated, too, because he followed Woody everywhere the cowboy went.

Slinky stood with Woody, after Dolly's attention was caught by Totoro, who intended to repeat Buzz's flight. The dog's expression changed to the worrying one.

"You know what?" He said with his tail wiggling nervously. "I've talked with our pack already. Don't worry about Mom or Dad, we'll get you back anyway!"

Woody looked at Slinky in bewilderment. He was pretty sure, that he had not tell him about his fears.

"How did you know?"

"Well, we all realize how it's with weary toys." said Slinky seriously and lowered his stare. His voice shuddered. "And since we all know, *where* everything they consider trash gets in the end..."

Bullseye nodded, agreeing. Woody pressed his lips for them to not shake too much and opened his arms by an almost forgotten reflex. Slinky jumped on his shoulders with front legs, and the doll squeezed to him, stroking the big head.

"...Thank you."

"I don't want to lose you." Slinky whined. "It was so wrong here without you two!"

Woody just hugged him tighter, feeling his last doubts evaporate.

The soft pinkish-yellow light put an end on the peaceful bustle in the room.

Like every time before, at the first sign of humans returning, everyone had to go back on their places. Woody and Buzz did it, too: into the closet. Bullseye's dropped ears and sad eyes made Woody feel horrible, but there was no other way. They could meet later, if Bonnie would go out for longer time.

"That was something." Buzz laughed after they hid behind the boxes. "My best flight so far! Pity, Jessie didn't see that."

"If you ever do it again..." Woody began, but stopped at the look on Buzz's face.

"I surely don't mind."

The way the ranger said it and a pure honesty in the blue eyes made Woody's voice box bounce. Absentmindedly, he took off his hat and leaned closer.

"Me neither."

"Hi, toys!"

Woody jerked to Buzz, turning to the sound with eyes wide in terror. Buzz stiffened in alert, looking at the closet door like a prey animal on a predator. Without a word, they hastily moved to the farthest corner with the same silent coordination as before.

The peaceful time was really over, as well as the pleasantly foggy mood. That was foreseeable, even if they would prefer it to come much later. But the next thing they heard was unexpected at all.

The light, hectic footsteps were followed by the heavier ones.

"Shall we see, what's so scary in the closet, Bonnie?"

Buzz gasped slightly at the chill in his wires, and held Woody's arm to make him and himself steady. Why, just why could not they have a rest? Woody let out a whimpering sound, as he felt the humans' attention on them - even if through the wooden door.

Say "no".

"Come on, dear. I'm here, and I'm pretty sure, the monster isn't as scary in the light!" said Mom kindly.

Please, say "no".

"...O-okay." said Bonnie. "Don't worry, Jessie, Mom will protect us!" She added more bravely.

Woody bit his lower lip, feeling the familiar heat in his eyes, not turning them from the dark silhouettes behind the planks. Why could not they leave them alone?! For just an another night and a day...

There was no place and enough time to hide more thoroughly. The only hope were shadows from clothes, boxes and the walls. Probably, that would be enough.

Just as they thought about it, the door opened, letting the light inside, making the shadows shallower. The huge, more prominent one lay on the dusty floor and white walls. Woody pulled his legs closer to him by reflex, wishing to become smaller, less noticeable.

"Look, Bonnie, the monster hid from us!"

The shadow moved. Woody glanced up and saw the despair in Buzz's eyes. They had to freeze right now, to not let them - and everyone - away, whatever would come next. Buzz nodded slightly to the cowboy and locked his fingers around the soft elbow. Woody made a short nod, too. After that, they went limp at once.

"Hey, see? No one's there!"

The shadow became bigger. The clothes above moved. Woody pleaded himself to stay still, when he saw the woman's figure above, searching in hanging sweaters and shirts. He could not do anything beyond it.

Then, she turned her head to the boxes.

Eyes. Glasses. No. Nononodontlookdont...

The woman stopped, petrified. There were her daughter's toys, which were lost more than a month ago... On the park playground. She was fully sure of it, as she herself helped to search for them. And now, they were there, in the most dusty and dark corner of the closet.

She bowed to reach for the cowboy doll, and suddenly got a piercing pain in her head.

...leaveusjustleaveusalone!!!

Strange, but, maybe, she just moved too sharply - she got headaches because of it from time to time. She took the doll, and pain became deeper, strongly pulsating.

...donthurtmeatleastpleasedonthurtus...

"Bonnie, did you find your lost toys?" Mom asked the girl, barely aware of how feebly it sounded.

"No?" Bonnie frowned and hugged her cowgirl doll tighter.

"Well, here they are." Mom straightened.

She noticed the space ranger action figure hanging on the doll's arm and took it up, so the toy would not dangle in air. Not only the weird headache did not stop, it even became stronger, as she tried to disassemble the plastic hand from the rag one.

For some reason, she felt an urge to cry.

Bonnie smiled widely, as her mom got out of the closet with the familiar yellow, blue, white and green mass in her hands. But the smile dropped down slowly, when she saw her expression.

In the light of the golden hour, everything became evident. The cowboy doll was sewn and re-sewn all over its body and limbs with threads of different colors, missing its red stitch on the shoulder. Its face was cut in some places, even if it was not very noticeable. The space ranger toy had long, deep cuts everywhere, even on neck and face, and some buttons seemed lousy, as if they were removed and put back into place. The left side of the green plate was melted. In disbelief, Mom looked at boots of the both: there was "BONNIE" above less prominent "ANDY" written on them. So, it was not a mistake. But in no way in the world her daughter would play with them like this.

And now, wherever they had been, they appeared in her closet. The chill ran through the woman's spine.

"Bonnie, are you sure, that you didn't find them?" Mom asked seriously. "Or nobody gave them to you?"

Bonnie looked down and shook her head. Mom sighed, trying to stay calm: that was what she afraid of. She crouched in front of her daughter.

"You see, they're there." She spoke out softly. "But they're, well..."

Bonnie's eyes widened, as she saw briefly her toys closer.

"Woody! Buzz!" She yelped, but her face distorted, when she reached out for them.

Bonnie did not even have to see all the damages. She just instantly knew, that something was not right, completely wrong in a way she could not comprehend, but it was clear, that she had to protect them from something, as the toys were *scared.* Scared of something much bigger, than she could imagine, and it was enough for her to start bawling right away.

Immediately, Mom embraced her, and Bonnie clinged to her and the toys in her hands.

"It wasn't me!" she cried out. "Don't take them away, please!"

"Oh, dear." said Mom softly. "Of course I won't, but we'll need to repair them..."

"You will?" Bonnie sniffed and looked at Mom with eyes full of hope.

"Don't even doubt." The woman shook her daughter's shoulder and smiled assuredly. "Remember, how I've fixed Dolly once? No one can even notice!"

"Yes!" Bonnie jumped in joy. She glanced at the toys, noticed Buzz's hand holding Woody's arm, and added seriously: "But them both, they want to stay together."

Without a thought, Mom laughed at the words. It was a marvel, how Bonnie seemed to catch the mood of speechless things, be it the cat or her toys.

"Sure, love. Would you help me with the sewing kit and paint?"

Bonnie nodded readily, and Mom felt her migraine becoming less vicious.

If it were not for willpower and a reflex to stay still in front of humans, Woody was sure, that he would kick, bite and run away as soon as he was gotten a hold of. Instead, the wild fright took the form of familiar fiberglass overfilling his head.

He could see, that Mom got it. He knew, that it multiplied their chances to be thrown out. But he could not control his sheer panic at the touches, voices, eyes, glasses and the whole fact that yet again he was handled against his will.

He was a toy. It was the most natural thing for a toy. But after everything, he just could not stand it anymore.

Only when the humans took the decision, Woody found his ability to think more or less like a sentient being. So, they were not going to separate them or throw them out. They were in the toy state, so the needles...

...stopititstoomuchicanticantpleasestopit...

...would not hurt at all. Would they? Being stitched by humans in the toy state became a faint memory, and Woody was not sure, if it would be painful now. What if *he* broke him in that way, too?

Being put on a table caused the new, higher wave of panic.

Hard surface under his back, the lamp, the shadow above, the blink on glasses... Buzz is with him, the lamp is yellow, the glasses are Mom's, he is not *there*, not *there*... He is in the toy state, not demanded to be motionless but animated, but in the proper toy state... Buzz is here, he was not allowed to be nearby him, so he is not *there*...

Woody desperately concentrated on Buzz's grip. He would certainly go insane, if the ranger let go.

Suddenly, through the smog of animal fear, he heard a sniff. It was so unexpected, that Woody's attention focused on it. Mom put down the spool and the needle, took off her glasses and put a hand on her eyes. That was not the thing the toy awaited for at all, but the next one took him aback even more.

The stream of some sensation began to fill his stuffing. Warm, heavy like a blanket and bittersweet like sun at dusk, not promising anything, but nonetheless soothing. The only beings Woody caught something like this were toys he could count by fingers on his single hand, but now, it was coming from the human.

It was... *Compassion*?

From the human, to the toy?

In disbelief, Woody abruptly forgot about his own fears. He heard Mom sniffing quietly and rubbing her eyes, clearly trying to not show her tears to Bonnie.

She felt sorry for them. Even if unknowingly, she amended for everything *the human* had done. She would never hurt them, and not only because they were Bonnie's toys.

The new stuffing began to do its job cautiously: taking the emotions, discharging them, making them brighter and giving back. Woody could never get hold of the process, even with *the human*, whose emotions eventually broke him in their alien abhorrence. But Mom's ones were not like them at all. They were not only safe, but somehow *healing*, and there was a lot. Even more, than Woody could process.

Slowly, the prickly sensation behind the eyes faded away. Mom carefully touched the doll's shoulder, as if asking for permission. Woody did not protest this time, as his head became fuzzy, just like it had to be in the toy mode.

The needle and scissors, which Mom used to get rid of *the human's* stitches to make new, almost invisible ones, did not hurt at all.

Buzz could not see the whole picture, but even he felt, that his friend relaxed on his own, not like back in *there*. Thus, everything had to be alright. Mom handled them with great care, and for some reason, which made no sense from the

logical point of view, Buzz saw, that she actually cared about them.

That was something new. Even Andy's mom had never shown it. Still, Buzz did not mind it, when the woman began to rub his armor with a sandpaper to smooth the scratches and the melted spot. In fact, it was nice to be maintained, knowing, that the human did not have any malevolent intentions.

That was, until Mom pushed one of his phrase buttons by accident.

"*IMZZZZZZFHHTYRMMMNNNFFFFTSSSS*"

Buzz felt his batteries going cold. He could barely even understand what his voice device tried to say, not to mention Mom's obvious horror. Now, he was certainly doomed. He tightened the grip on Woody's arm unconsciously,

"What was that?"

Buzz saw the another, larger figure entering the room. Dad stared at his family questioningly.

"We found Buzz and Woody!" exclaimed Bonnie. "Mom repairs them!"

"Yeah, there's quite... a lot to repair." Mom said unsurely.

Dad came closer, making Buzz bristle inwardly. He barely started to believe the one human, but not the other.

"Holy Jesus." Dad scratched his head. "Where have they been?"

"In Bonnie's closet." Mom pursed her lips. "That's the thing to discuss later."

"I don't know how they came there." added Bonnie.

Dad's stare became darker. By his expression, Buzz realized, that it had little to do with them. So, they did not suspect anything about the toys. Good. To his surprise, he actually understood the reason for the man's anxiety.

"I see... And what was that sound?"

"It's Buzz. Something with his voice device." Mom explained.

Dad tried to take the ranger toy, but suddenly flinched and instinctively looked at the source of discomfort: the cowboy doll. Bonnie glanced at them and decided to intervene.

"Don't worry, Woody!" She said cheerfully. "Dad won't hurt your friend!"

"Oof... Thanks."

Dad rubbed his forehead, confused at the pang of fierce headache, which dissipated slowly after his daughter's words. Maybe, he had to pay a visit to a doctor, just in case. He pushed Buzz's button again.

"*YYYYFFFFFFFTMMMSSSSRRRGSSSFFFFF*"

"Roger that." said Dad. "Seems to be broken, maybe, water or something. I think, I've seen the spares on eBid."

"You'll fix it?" asked Bonnie hopefully.

"Later, but yes." The man smiled at his daughter beam. "What's about the cowboy? I thought, he had something like this, too?"

Mom took Woody - it was a bit hard, since the ranger's fingers were like being glued to the arm - and pulled on the string. No sound came out aside from the soft scratch. Bonnie frowned pitifully.

"Well, at least, this one doesn't try to summon anything." Dad chuckled without amusement.

"Will you fix him too?" Bonnie pleaded.

"I'll try, sure." The man sighed. "Not that I've seen those, but who knows."

He decided to not tell his daughter about the price of anything related to the Western set he stumbled upon and the fact, that he had never seen a single copy of the particular doll. Buzz, in his turn, saw his thinking process clearly. Eventually, he would never hear any of Woody's boastful catchphrases again. The single thought of it was harrowing.

On the other hand, the whole mood in the room spoke for itself. They both were truly appreciated. By toys and by the family. Those humans did not want to harm them even more or even get rid of them. They hoped for it harder than for anything - and, finally, they got it.

Dad gave Mom the other kind of white paint, which he said to be better for holding damages and filling the scratches. That was pretty thoughtful of him, as Buzz decided. Probably, he could trust not only Mom and Bonnie now, although he was not completely sure about it yet.

Their glasses unnerved him, even after all the care the humans had shown.

It was dark behind the windows, when Mom finished with painting and put Buzz - with Woody in tow - on the dining room windowsill for the space toy to dry properly. She did not try to unclinge his hand this time, and asked Bonnie to wait until tomorrow to play with them. After the dinner, the family moved to the living room and turned the lights off. The toys had not move, though, until they heard the good night wishes and closing doors much later, to not expose themselves accidentally.

Woody woke up, dizzy from the emotional washing machine he had gone through. The wild fear, despair, care, empathy, panic, first flickers of trust ripping through the thick wall of disbelief, the reason fighting with instincts, the urge

to give up on everything, to not feel anything at all, the boosts of hope... It all collided in the single mass, entangling with everything he built up before, during their journey and two days with friends, and it was going to explode in any second.

He took Buzz's hand, the only thing which was not covered in paint, by his both hands, to make sure, that everything was okay.

"Phew. That's what I call the maintenance." huffed Buzz with amusement.

"Yeah." Woody looked at his arms, legs and torso. The damage became much less noticeable. His eyes heated up, as well as his voice box. "They actually care..."

"Seems to be it." said Buzz softly and stroke the vinyl palm. "Sorry, can't move - paint is still wet."

Woody smiled sheepishly at the words, feeling tears starting to stream down his cheeks freely, as the whole mess inside finally burst.

Tears brought a relief instead of exhaustion. Buzz was motionless not because of dead batteries - he waited for the new paint to dry, covering his cuts. They were not under a gazebo in the monster's lair, but at home.

Now, the toys were fully certain of it.

Small disturbance of dust on the windowsill tells him, that the thing used the window to leave the room. He is also sure, that he closed the window before. It certainly had much more figurative brains, than the human imagined. The only thought makes him cletch his fists so hard that it hurts.

To think, the psychiatry MD got outsmarted by a pitiful rag doll. Ridiculous.

He searches his whole yard, looking under every shrub and hole, swearing, that the toy would pay dearly for all his pain and humiliation, as soon as he gets hold of it. The base of the gazebo catches his attention. He crouches down and sees two batteries along with a yellow spool. The ground around them is messed.

So, they were there. But the latter searchings are in vain: both toys ran away.The suburbs are big, and they can be basically anywhere. The human sighs: for now, he cannot do anything.

He does not harm his daughter's toys. He remembers, how much she cried about her doll and the rabbit. That was pathetic and, even though he had enough knowledge to console her, he wishes it to never happen again. Way too tiresome.

Instead, in the morning he cancels the private consultations for the week in advance, as he knows, that the clients would not like their doctor appearing with barely healed scars. After that, he opens the searching website.

He knows, that the only way the bastards can go is their home - the doll's pleads for it echo in his ears. The human remembers every bit of information he got from Phillips and from the toys themselves. Phillips used to live nearby "Davises" and the toys mentioned Andy - he has to search for the former owners of the house near the Phillips's old address. Then, their current location and, after that, their neighbors, who has a kid called Bonnie or something like that. The overall searching happens to be simpler, than the human imagined.

God bless the Internet.

Chapter 15 (http://archiveofourown.org/works/54313570/chapters/141266668)

Toys rejoiced at the duo returning after the repair, especially Andy's ones - they were relieved to not need to save anyone. Jessie, however, fell apart, as soon as they got into the privacy of the closet. She was scared to death and could not stop apologizing for not being able to prevent Bonnie and Mom from looking for "the monster". She genuinely tried with all her stuffing, but it was simply not enough. Now, it was their and Bullseye's turn to calm down the cowgirl.

"...you should turn it down too, y'know, at least when we're around." She sniffed at last, and gave Woody a glare. "It was like my head went through a dryer."

"I'm sor... Ouch!" Woody flinched as Jessie pinched him on his knee. "Can't promise, I didn't control it!"

"Well, maybe, it'll get better." said Buzz. "They seem to be... not so bad." He satisfiedly looked on his arm, which was just like new after painting.

Woody saw his sister beaming and bit his tongue. Even after the repairment, he still was nervous to think about humans' hands. However, the family was sincere without a doubt, and Jessie was clearly pleased to hear Buzz's rational words, even though there was a hint of a doubt in his voice. They both were given a chance, and now, they had to give a chance to the humans... At least, to those in the house. At least, for Jessie and the others.

To the toys' surprise, it appeared to be not as hard as they imagined.

Naturally, adults never worried about their child's playthings, unless they got lost or damaged, and even then they were more concerned about their kid's mood. So did Mom and Dad. As long as Bonnie was happy with her found toys, they were consent with it.

In fact, they had more important things to do. Soon after Woody and Buzz returned to the nursery, Trixie mentioned cameras Dad ordered on his computer with a "fast delivery" option. It did not tell anything to others, but Buzz understood,

that he got the reason for the man's anxiety right. Dad was concerned about them being found in the closet, and thought, that someone could broke into the house, while the family was away. While it brought a relief that humans did not even consider the possibility of toys arriving on themselves, Buzz could not help but feel sorry for the father.

Bonnie, in her turn, played with the space ranger and the Sheriff for a bit on the first day. She imagined them telling the others about the "Big Scary Monster" they had met in their adventures in "Great Wild Planes" and how they had escaped from it, ending up in the "Forgotten Mine" somehow. After that, they "asked for a rest", and she left them alone, turning her attention to the others. In his previous life, Woody would hate it: Bonnie used to leave him out, concentrating on Buzz and Jessie instead. Now he could not be more grateful. It still felt uncomfortable to be played with, even if by the kid. Buzz too was relieved to not be handled around for the exactly same reason. So, they just sat aside in the toy mode, watching the girl and slowly getting into the "new" normal.

And this too appeared to be easier, than it seemed. The routine stood the same: safe days and playful evenings. Other toys treated Buzz and Woody a bit gentlier than before, but not as if they were made of glass or whatever. The only exception was Jessie, who was watching them both like a hawk and gave Mr. Potato Head and Hamm very meaningful glares, if the latter overstepped on their remarks about both's clinginess to each other.

She became even more fierce about it after the certain episode Woody remembered as one of the most warm and pleasant times in his existence. He suspected, that Jessie had seen something: she just could not wipe the smug grin off her face for the whole day. Buzz was rather nervous about it, until the cowgirl took him aside for a "small talk". After that he returned with a face, which was asking for a brick, and re-assured Woody, that everything was perfectly fine.

Two days were spent in serenity. Not that "serenity" was a right word for the life in the room, but for Woody and Buzz it was exactly this.

On the third day, everything went down the hole.

The windowsill was a risky place to spend time, but it was worth a chance to peek outside, warm up and have some fresh air. In addition, it was a good way to predict the humans' arrival. When the family was away, the toys took turns to watch the yard from the window.

Woody considered to set a new rule of freezing every time toys saw a passing-by human, but after a bit of thinking he dropped the idea as counter-productive. The "window guards" had to warn the room about Bonnie's coming in time, which was impossible in the toy state. Instead, on the first staff meeting he explained properly why everyone had to be extra cautious. It worked better than he imagined: his fellows began to freeze more often. Luckily, Woody himself and Buzz had always been tacitly free from the windowsill "duty", so their own avoidance of it did not make the situation even more awkward.

All in all, the sight of toys on the windowsill freezing from time to time became more or less common. That's why Woody did not pay attention when Rex and Trixie suddenly became still. Only when he finished fixing the Peas-in-the-Pod's zipline, he felt something off.

The cowboy glanced up to the window. The dinosaurs did not move - for five minutes already. Woody's voice box got colder.

"Is something wrong?" asked Peanelope shyly.

"No, everything's fine." Woody turned to them and smiled. "Don't worry."

It was easier to say than do. Sounds in the room became hollower, as the familiar fear began to replace the voice of reason. Woody noticed Buzz, who was in a middle of learning to rope-throw with Jessie, missing one of the aims way too stupidly even for him: the ranger just could not stop looking at the window. He caught the cowboy's stare and frowned nervously.

They both told themselves, that, probably, it was some child, who got interested in the dinosaurs figurines, or a random weirdo. There were thousands of humans in the town, weren't them? The life around continued on its way, and so did Woody and Buzz, despite the creepy feeling. Only Jessie stopped to frustrate at the ranger for every misaiming.

After half an hour Rex and Trixie jumped from the windowsill, as if it was a hot frying pan.

"What took you so long?" asked Mr. Potato Head in annoyance. "I thought you forgot how to move!"

"I couldn't!" exclaimed Rex. "That man just didn't turn away!"

"The man?" Woody jolted.

"Yeah, not even a handsome one." huffed Trixie. "I'd give 3 of 10 only for the height and weight ratio."

"Can you describe him?" asked Buzz. By his steely voice, Woody knew, that he was holding back panic.

"Dude, I know you like tall guys, but didn't know you were into that kind of..." drawled Trixie, saw the ranger's face and hastily said: "Tall, thin, had a mask on a left eye."

Woody found himself getting close to Buzz. No way. It could not be *him*. There had to be other tall one-eyed men in the suburbia. Some other unlucky human with unhealthy interest in strangers' windows, not in toys behind them...

"Was he half-bald?" Buzz sounded as if he was about to choke.

"Yes!" Rex nodded readily. "He was like the evil scientists from the shows!"

"Blast him!!!"

The toys around jumped, as Buzz hit the wall with his fist and remained in the position, with one hand on the wall and the other on the lowered face. Woody quickly put a hand on his helmet without saying a word because of a heavy lump in his throat. His own knees shook.

It was *him*. *He* found Bonnie's house. The thought itself was so unbelievable and yet so real, that only a need to soothe Buzz held Woody from crying out. What else did *he* want from them, wasn't everything *he* got enough?!

"Were we wrong?" Rex's devastated voice woke the Sheriff up.

"No, you did the exactly right thing." said Woody and inhaled shakily. "Everyone, listen. If there's no other one-eyed mad-scientist-like crazy man out there, then, it's the human, who toynapped us."

The toys shared confused glances.

"How did he find us now, then?" asked Dolly.

"I guess, in the way we found Sunnyside." said Woody grimly. His thoughts quickened, like a spooked herd. "If any of you see *him*, go still and do not move under any circumstances. If you somehow end up outside and Bonnie's not around, hide anywhere you can and try to get back into the house unnoticed..."

"Maybe, try to beat him up all together?" said Mr. Potato Head. "To finish your work, so to say."

"Write me in." said Hamm.

"And to reveal us to the whole street. Great idea." sneered Jessie, patting Buzz's back and Woody's shoulder simultaneously.

"But if we do something more sophisticated, like a poisoned stab..." said Mr. Pricklepants thoughtfully.

"Stop it." Buzz sighed tiredly and straightened up. "Do what Woody said and try to not even get into his vision alone. He's either after us or searches for other alive toys. In any way, he's dangerous."

"Gosh, I hope he'll never appear again." Trixie shivered. "He even *looked* dangerous!"

Woody and Buzz agreed with her wholeheartedly, although the crippling fear did not go away. *The human* knew where their house was. Even if they hid well, *he* could easily toynap anyone else to make them come out. He would break Jessie, or Slinky, or Rex and others...

They had to overdo it back then.

With a wild shriek, Woody jumps on the human.

He sinks his teeth into the first place he can, hears the human screaming. The surface rips easily, and the doll gnaws through it, kicks with spurs, the skin below is harder to rip through, but it tears apart eventually. He feels the warm liquid in his mouth, seeping into his cloth, hears the human's howls and his own screech, bites harder, everywhere he can reach for, barely aware, that there is not only blood streaming out, but something jelly-like too. He wishes to have claws or at least nails to shred the face into stripes. He waited for too long, and the human deserves all of it.

It takes only a couple of minutes, even though for Woody in his frenzy it seems like eternity. Suddenly, he feels the strong hand getting hold of him, yelps and bites, as it takes him away from the face. The small piece of flesh remains in his teeth, and the next second he ends up being thrown onto the table.

Woody sobers up, as he hears the human screaming and holding his face with redness between his fingers. This is the moment.

He runs to Buzz's cage, slipping on blood around, and leaps onto it, barely clinging on bars in time. The only thing he has in head is the lock. Woody climbs upon the cage, gets to the mechanism and begins to open it, remembering the human's actions. He does not notice Buzz staring at him with widened eyes, shifting away from bloody drops.

"You little piece of...!!!"

The shadow covers Woody, and the hand lands on him. He tramples it with spurs, tries to hold on the lock, but it is in vain - the human is incomparably stronger. He only manages to make the last move, which opens the cage.

It is the pure luck the human does not notice it, too lost in pain and fury. Woody bites on the hand, something rattles, yet again he is thrown on the table... And shrieks from fierce pain in his stomach.

Woody looks down and sees the so familiar paper cutter now piercing him to the surface by the stripe between his vest sides. It is a weak place, but it hurts so much, that the doll cannot do anything aside from wailing, slowly aknowleging, what he has done and that he failed.

"Crying now?!"

Woody hears the human's hoarse, insane bark, gets quiet and glances up. The human glares straight at him, without glasses, madly grinning, his side of a face now is a horrible bloody mess.

And he lights a long fireplace match.

Woody's scream drowns the metallic sound behind, his unrestrained terror holds the human's attention, but he is not aware of it. The plan failed. They are done for. That and the flickering flame are the only things he is able to think about. The match comes closer, the knife and the hand hold him in place, he sees the loathed face above, the white lamp, he can beg for mercy, but it is useless, that are the last things he is going to see in the end...

By the force of desperation, he frees his leg and kicks the fingers with a match.

The hit is strong enough. The match slips from the human's fingers... and lands on papers.

The human gives out a yelp and instantly lets go of the doll. Woody feels the growing heat behind and loses all the ability to even think. The instincts, pain, sheer terror overwhelm him more, than in the incinerator. The sound of bursting glass, the heat becomes even stronger, shadows dance on walls, the table and papers are on fire fueled by remains of the strange liquid in the breaking jars. Woody cannot hear, deafened by something shrilly, which he does not even recognize as his own voice. He tugs on the cloth, the pain blinds him, but it is better, than being burnt alive...

And then, from above, there comes water.

It splashes on burning papers, the human, who stops thrashing around in bewilderment, and the rag doll, who curls on his torn abdomen. Woody looks dully at his stuffing under the strong cold rain coming from a sprinkler, but cannot comprehend anything besides the pain and that breathing becomes even harder. The streams coming from him are painted red.

"You..."

Woody petrifies at the low growl behind him. He turns to it, looks at the human, who is soaking wet and completely out of his mind, and hisses helplessly, shifting back on all fours, unable to stand straight. The human comes closer by the blink of an eye. Woody bites weakly on the hand, feels the fingers in his stuffing, and yells for Buzz in pure despair of a dying animal.

The human stumbles with a surprised huff, fingers disappear, causing yet another painful shock. By the corner of his eye Woody sees something small and white smashing into the human's leg. The human loses his balance, slips on puddles on the floor. The toy does not recognize it, until he ends up in the air and falls onto cold, watery tiling. A tremendous rumble above, a yelp, a sickening crack, and another, much smoother clatter.

And silence.

The sprinkler continues to work. Woody gets up on his elbows, not believing, that he is still alive. Pain and lack of air ensure it, though. The sound of small, plastic steps comes to him, ripping through the thick fog of madness. Small hands lay on his back.

"I'm here."

The deep bass along with the shock of the contact with another toy sends a wave of so long-forgotten comfort through Woody's body.

"Buzz?.." He whispers, unconsciously cletching to the plastic hand.

"I was late." Buzz sighes gravelly. "Sorry."

His face is exhausted, eyes are uneven, legs are stiff, as if he stands only by the power of joints, like a sleepy horse. Woody tucks his face into his arm, wishing to never let go of it.

"No, you were just in time."

"You forgot something, by the way." Buzz smiles faintly and gives Woody his hat.

"Eh? Oh. Thanks." The cowboy looks at the hat as if not recognizing it, takes it and puts on his head.

He looks behind Buzz and sees the giant pile of the human laying motionlessly on the floor. They did it. Even if everything went against the initial plan, they did it. But there is no time to celebrate.

They go to the wall with the window. Buzz helps Woody to climb up, slowly and warily, to keep the remaining charge. Woody opens the window, letting fresh air inside, and goes out without looking back. Buzz does too and helps his friend to get up, as the latter falls on ground, breathing heavily.

They have to go as far as they can now, find a shelter, have a rest. Both are way too tired and damaged to realize, that they are finally free.

The human appeared again on the next day, when the family was not at home. Again, he looked at Bonnie's window for forty minutes. He did it first in the morning, then by 2 pm and 4 pm, just before family arrival. Hamm, who saw him first, were uncharacteristically tame in his sarcasm for the whole remaining day, and Mr. Potato Head prohibited his wife and LGM to even go near the window. Bullseye could not leave the cowfolk alone, shaking from his head to the tip of his tail. Slinky was no better, even if he could express his horror with actual words.

The same thing repeated on the day after. *The human* appeared by the house when no one was there, and watched the toys. By the weekend, all toys had already seen him. Nobody showed themselves out, but it was clear for Woody and Buzz,

that *the human* noticed the rotation of "decorations" on the windowsill in the seemingly empty house. There could not be any other way.

The air in the room thickened with alert and deep fear. Woody could not stay calm or sleep. Fury of unfairness and a worry for his gang, Buzz and himself tore his voice box apart. What if *the human* saw one of them? What if he caught someone from their group? Woody was perfectly sure that the monster would tear or break them apart to make "his" playthings drop the masquerade and leave the hideout. What would come next, Woody did not even dare to think about. The nightmares returned in their full vividness with added images of Jessie and Slinky ending up in *his* hands.

Buzz rolled all the possible solutions in his thoughts, discussed some of them with Woody, Jessie and Dolly, and realized, that they were basically stuck. *The human* did not do anything yet only because no one ended up outside. It was the matter of time somebody would be dragged out by the cat or forgotten by Bonnie after a play in the yard. Then, everything he and Woody had fought for would go down the drain, because they just could not leave their pals to *him*. Indeed, *the human* was a smart bastard. And it was their fault, that he was lured to their home.

They could not know for how long it was going to continue. The only hope was their human family, who became more agitated too for whatever reason.

On Sunday morning, the family stood at home. The weather was nice for doing mundane stuff: a bit cloudy and not too hot. Mom tended the garden plants, Dad was maintaining the car, and Bonnie decided to play the picnic party in the yard.

Being outside was the last thing Woody wanted, but he made himself to calm down enough to not spook his kid. Buzz did it too. He did not even have to cletch on the cowboy's arm to make Bonnie take them out together: the girl somehow knew, that they did not want to be separated. So, she took them too with the whole gang, chirping about how much fun they all were going to have at the "picnic". Woody was more concerned about his pack safety, though.

As usual, Bonnie played with them for some minutes and left them aside to "have a moment alone". She even put Buzz into a sitting position and placed Woody against him, as if he was leaning on his friend. The cowboy felt warmth towards the girl for that thoughtfulness. Perhaps, she saw something going on between her favorite toys, despite not being able to tell it for sure. He had to admit, that Andy, even being the best kid in the world, would never notice it.

The toys were facing the the whole company and the house. The playtime went on peacefully, like always. Usually, Buzz preferred something more action-y, but being under soft sun with the same soft toy on his side felt nice too, in its own way.

Suddenly, Bonnie stopped chatting and looked up curiously.

"Hey, you have quite a big bunch here?"

Both Buzz and Woody petrified in the toy mode. *The voice*. They knew it.

"Yes?.." said Bonnie cautiously. "They're my toys."

"I see. They look very cute. Isn't that one from the "Round-Up" cartoon?"

Bonnie looked at Jessie in her hand and smiled. Woody felt his stuffing sickeningly curling, and Buzz's batteries grew colder.

"That's Jessie! Is there a cartoon about her?"

"Oh yes, indeed!" *The laugh*. So friendly, that Woody wanted to throw up. "And about the cowboy, too."

No. No, no, no...

"Really? That's Woody... Oh." Bonnie took the doll up and noticed the space ranger's hand stuck on his arm. "Woody and Buzz Lightyear, they're best friends!" She showed her toys to the peacefully smiling man leaning on the white fence.

The only healthy eye looked at the toys. The cowboy doll looked back at him with his dull, unmoving eyes, hiding teeth behind the kind smile.

...onemoveillkillyouiswearilltearyouapart...

The man did not change his expression, but whispered something. Bonnie did not hear it, unlike the toys.

"Subject two. Move."

It took Woody all his will and Buzz's tightened grip to not obey the order. The prickly sensation began to grow behind his eyes.

...goaway. Go away. Don't you dare to harm us.

"What's wrong?" Bonnie asked uncertainly.

"Nothing, don't worry. You're so lucky to have such toys! Do you know, that they have a secret?" said the man evenly.

Bonnie hugged both Buzz and Woody tightly.

"No?.."

Buzz's grip became almost painful. Woody could feel, that the ranger held back rage.

Leave. Bonnie. ALONE.

Go away, I'll tear your other eye out if you won't. Go away, leave us alone, leaveusalone...

Fear and anger entangled with despair. Woody did not want to feel the fiberglass in his head, did not want to cry ever again, did not want to be afraid so much, that his urge to fight dissipated, yet it was happening again, even at home. The home itself seemed to be a cruel joke now, the last chance to catch a breath before being tortured to death. Their only fault was being not careful enough - how could all of the consequences be fair?!

The man hissed and touched his forehead. Bonnie stepped back, glancing between him and the toys.

"What's going on here?"

"Mom!" Bonnie exclaimed and ran to the rotund figure going to them.

The mother hugged her daughter briefly and looked at the man behind the fence with slightly narrowed eyes.

"Good day, mister...?"

"Warren, m'am." The man bowed slightly. "Arthur Warren, pleased to meet you."

"Same." Mom said in the tone, which was screaming of the opposite. "What do you want from my daughter?"

She moved to the front, covering Bonnie. Woody silently begged Mom to shoo *the human* away forever. It was their only chance to stay safe and undiscovered. Again, their fate depended on human's whims, but this one, probably, could protect them, couldn't she?

"You see, I'm a collectioner." Warren said joyfully. "You have a very expensive toy, for your notice! By 'expensive' I mean thousands of dollars. Namely, the cowboy doll. You see, I'm collecting the set of the old TV show, 'Woody's Round-Up', and that's the last piece. What do you think about a deal? Two thousands bucks for it."

Mom listened patiently, although Woody felt something increasingly dark coming from her. He wanted badly to squeeze to Buzz: what if she agree? What if her decline would not be enough? Just like with Al, but Al was not a maniac, at least, not *that* kind of a maniac...

"My daughter's toys are not for sale." She said plainly. "Especially the cowfolk and the space ranger. As for the cowboy, it's basically a DIY now for all the repairment it got recently."

She was furious. Woody could swear it with his pull string. Thus, they had a chance.

"It doesn't matter! You know, the doll is unique, one of the kind. Even if it's slightly damaged and goes only with the space ranger..."

"Bonnie, take your toys and go inside, please." Mom said in a sinisterly calm voice.

Bonnie nodded readily, as if she waited for it. She quickly grabbed everyone and ran to the house. Before the yard was changed by the living room, Woody noticed Dad coming from the car to join his wife.

The girl put the toys around her and sit under the window, unusually quiet, with a frown on her face. She did not let go of Woody and Buzz, hugging them tightly.

"Don't be afraid!" she said bravely. "Mom will protect us, but we have to be very quiet now!" She put a finger to her lips.

Toys remained quiet, just as she asked. They were certainly her best friends and listeners. Much later, Bonnie would remember weird, barely noticeable trembling of the soft toy in her arms, but now, it appeared as something absolutely normal for her.

Mom went back in ten or so minutes, but for everyone in the room it was like hours passed by. She still looked nervous, but smiled to Bonnie, seeing her daughter peeking at her from under hair bangs.

"It's alright. The man went away and won't return, we made sure of it."

"Really?" Bonnie beamed.

"Of course, dear." Mom crouched in front of her. "And if he try, the policeman will get him! But promise to never talk to strangers if Dad or me aren't around, okay?"

"Okay!" Bonnie nodded and dashed to Mom to hug her. "We won't, never ever!"

"We?"

Bonnie pointed to the toys.

"They were scared, too!"

"Oh. I see." Mom laughed shortly and looked at them, feeling a bit ridiculous. "Don't be afraid, we won't give you out to him or anyone."

It had to be a strange coincidence, but the sensation of a brick in her head, which she got every time near the found toys, disappeared without a trace after those words.

Woody had no idea, how the adults made the monster leave, but *he* never came back.

The encounter still affected the whole room. The damages and vague tales were enough to persuade even the most skeptical toys, but seeing *the human* face to face was a completely different thing. Even Andy's toys, who had witnessed a

lot, were shaking for several days, and Chuckles admitted, that he finally understood, why Buzz and Woody became a bit like Lotso in his eyes with their distrust to humans in general.

The one who got it worst was Jessie. She felt the attention from *him*, knew about her brother's reflex to submit to *his* order, and got a panic attack in the middle of the next night after the visit. Luckily, she managed to creep into the closet in time, where Buzz and Woody met her.

"I don't know what I'd do in your place." The cowgirl confessed after she calmed down enough to speak coherently. "I can't even imagine how you've dared to attack him, he's so big and scary, I've never saw any other human like him!.."

"Maybe, it's because we had each other to fight for. I can't see any other logical reason." said Buzz seriously. "I wouldn't make it alone."

"You'd fight to death too, I believe." said Woody, patting his sister's back. "Maybe, even earlier. But without Buzz's help, I don't know how it could end well." He added gloomily.

"I hate to be so small." Jessie sighed deeply. "Even today, it was on them to decide, what to do. Mom and Dad protected Bonnie and us, but what if they decided to sell you?"

"But they didn't. That's the difference, I think." said Buzz.

"Maybe, yes." muttered Woody with uncertainty. "Still, if they did, good thing we have teeth."

Jessie smirked. It was nice to know, that they had at least something to protect themselves from their gods, who proved to be mad - and that they ended up with the most benevolent ones.

Some time later they discovered, why *the human* left for long. Dolly overheard the adults talking about the "restrictive order", and the dinosaurs were more than ready to search for it in the Internet.

"Who writes like this?" Mr. Potato Head resented at the first article. "Why can't they just say, what's it for?"

"That's a law language." said Woody.

"Aren't you a lawman? Can you decipher it?"

"Sounds good." said Slinky, who had already read through the wall of text. "It says, he's prohibited to even come close to our family."

Buzz smiled sinisterly.

"He's a doctor. Won't there be any consequences to his career?"

Trixie quickly tapped on the keyboard, only to get to another wall of text.

"Well, there'll be, at least in this state." said Slinky. "It'll destroy it."

Woody found himself grinning as well. He shook Buzz's shoulder slightly.

"He told something about 'for the best of humanity', eh?"

"Be afraid of your wishes." Buzz gently stroke his friend's side, suppressing an urge to kiss him right here to not embarrass others. They were going to have a lot of time for it a little later.

They realized, that the humans did it for Bonnie's safety, not for them. But still, they essentially won.

Close (#)